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A VISION OF TRUTH



BY ADELAIDE WALTHER



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Walther

1. Fiction, American

A VISION OF TRUTH

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GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

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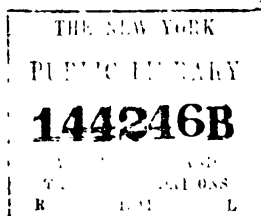
The Soul's Awakening

A STORY

PUBLISHED BY
THE AUTHOR
ADELAIDE WALTHER

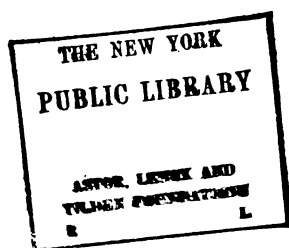
1915
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

M. Sm -



I Dedicate This Book
to my dear friend **Roberta A. Griffith**, of **Grand Rapids, Michigan**, President of the **Michigan Association of the Blind**, and author of the bill passed by the **Michigan Legislature** for the prevention of blindness.

Her Work
is an inspiration to hundreds of sightless ones in the **World of Darkness** and it is the author's hope that this book may strengthen and assist her lofty purpose of continued personal service.





Adelaide Walther

"He who helps me, may be my friend;
He who helps me to help myself, is my friend;
He who helps me to help others, is most my friend."

C.D. JEWELL AUG 8 - 1941



Adelaide

*"He who helps me, may be my friend;
He who helps me to help myself, is my friend;
He who helps me to help others, is most my friend."*

AUG 8 - 1941

The Author's Message

Love is what I bring to you, not a love that is
here today and gone tomorrow, but—
Love from the heart and soul, that will—
Lead to a secret path. Look, see and—
Follow a light to the Gateway of thought.
Listen, think, trust and believe the—
Voice from within, telling you how and—
Where to find the "lost word" and—
Key to unlock every heart and door in the
Universe. Seek, knock, open and there find—
Treasures long hidden, belonging to you.

. . .

Having myself found the secret path and spiritual treasures I am more than eager to share these blessings with those still lost in the wilderness, but sadly do I realize, that with all my love outpoured, I can not lead another into the light of true happiness—"If that soul is not willing to go."

"Every soul that has become awakened to the higher things of life, feels a desire to give of his best to the world—not for praise, but for love." In this life, I have but one aspiration: When my mission upon earth is finished, and I

look back upon my work, I may be able to rejoice in the thought, that the world will be just a little better for my having lived in it.

When, through my friend, Roberta Griffith, I learned the crying need of the Blind, and how they have been overlooked by our good philanthropists, giving millions yearly, for libraries, hospitals and educational institutions, homes for the aged, orphans and cripples, parks and playgrounds, in fact everything that money can produce, has been done for the welfare of the seeing world.

But now, let us ask our noble philanthropists: What has been done for the thousands journeying through the "sightless land—?" Very—very little.

When I realized how our most unfortunate brothers and sisters had almost been forgotten, I longed to become their friend in need. A friend, whose call would penetrate every human heart, beating with love and sympathy for the saddest affliction in life.

But what I should do to have my fond dream for the Blind come true—that was the great problem confronting me.

One night, I witnessed a very interesting play. The moral and impressive lesson it contained was an inspiration and revelation to me.

I, myself, would write "A drama of Life" in which I could embody some of my cherished ideals, and psychological laws, so vital to human happiness. But as my thoughts and desires expanded, I realized that even though I could write a powerful play, it would only bring forth,

and emphasize essential elements to satisfy the public fancy, but to reach deep into the hearts of the people, I felt that the message I longed to give to the world, could be better told in a story. So I at once began to write my first novel, in hopes, that the love principle it contains will help men and women find within themselves, the source of all true happiness.

My book, *A Vision of Truth*, is finished. I now send it forth into the world on a holy mission, and pray most earnestly that the two-fold idea the story exemplifies will appeal to the hearts of all generous people, who I now ask in the spirit of love, to help me, help those entombed in physical darkness.

Let your heart and hand reach out to those that can not see it extended—but only feel—your friendly touch. Let your kind and tender words cast a ray of sunshine into their dark and lonely world. Let a noble deed and gift from your heart, help to build a solid foundation, upon which to erect—through the power of love—“A Lighthouse for the Blind.”

This is the author's *dream*—and motive of writing *A Vision of Truth*.

Many will now ask the question: “What will a Lighthouse do for the Blind—?”

Through the enforcement of the new law for the prevention of blindness, thousands will be saved from going through life in hopeless despondency. To those, alone and friendless, an operation offered through the agency of the Lighthouse, may restore to them the God-given blessing of sight.

To the hopeless blind will be given the opportunity for work, in which they are competent, and do as well as their more fortunate friends. To the aged, unable to longer sustain their earthly existence, the Lighthouse will offer a home, where in peace and comfort they can spend their declining years in place of—the poorhouse. To many afflicted ones, surrounded with all the luxuries of life, forgotten and neglected many times, by those nearest and dearest to them; to these sad ones—the Lighthouse will extend: friendship—love—and the sunshine of human kindness.

If you cannot realize the sorrow and sufferings of the blind and lonely hours they are forced to endure in deadly monotony, just close your eyes for a few minutes—and think—what it would mean to you, *never* to behold again the wondrous beauty of this world, that perhaps in your great sorrow or happiness you did not fully appreciate.

If you have trials, and heavy burdens of your own to bear, loose yourself in a worthy cause.

In the service of others, your troubles will cease to exist, and you will experience such happiness as you never have before.

Try it, dear friends and—know for yourself.

The opportunity for a grand and noble work is now offered you; accept of it—and receive from God the blessings, and joy of heaven.

ADELAIDE WALTHER

"BERGHEIM"

BALL PARK BLVD.

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

"I followed happiness to make her mine
Past towering oak and swinging ivy vine,
She fled, I chased, o'er slanting hill and dale,
O'er fields and meadows, in the purpling vale
Pursuing rapidly o'er dashing stream
I scaled the dizzy cliffs where eagles scream;
I traversed swiftly every land and sea
But always happiness eluded me.

"Exhausted, fainting, I pursued no more,
But sank to rest upon a barren shore.
One came and asked for food, and one for alms;
I placed the bread and gold in bony palms.
One came for sympathy, and one for rest;
I shared with every needy one my best;
When lo, sweet happiness, with form divine,
Stood by me, whispering softly, 'I am thine.' "

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CHAPTER I

The air was filled with a delicious scent of June roses. Wafted upon the light summer breeze it penetrated the chamber where Truth Ralston, a maiden, innocent and fair as a snow white dove, sat arrayed for her bridal.

The happy song of the birds outside fell like a mournful symphony upon her ear. She glanced into the mirror before her and saw the reflection of her own sorrowful heart.

In her little hands, trembling with the thought of the hour which was fast approaching, she held the veil she was so soon to wear, entwined with the flowers of the bridal-wreath. Upon these dainty flowers—symbols of innocence, tears fell like crystal dew-drops, revealing the sympathetic bond between her soul and the purity and loveliness of God's most perfect creation.

The glistening sheen of her silken robe enhanced the ethereal beauty of her face and revealed the symmetrical outline of her lithe figure. The changeful expressiveness of her mobile features gave her countenance a singular and indefinable charm, which was accentuated by a certain wistful gravity of demeanor, unusual to one so young, due to a calamity that had befallen the early years of her life.

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When a mere child she was stricken with scarlet fever, which left her partially blind; skilled oculists pronounced her case incurable. Her parents were obliged to place her in the school for the blind, where after three years, her sight was restored in a manner that in earlier years would have been deemed miraculous.

Truth's father, who did not live to rejoice in the restoration of his daughter's sight, left a fortune, while not large, was amply sufficient to provide, not only for the comforts of his wife and daughter, but for the refinements of luxury as well. To compensate for the long darkness, the years following the recovery of Truth's sight, were filled with the delights of travel, and varied diversions that fill a society girl's life.

Mrs. Ralston was a thoroughly worldly woman, ambitious only for the social success of her child. Accordingly, she had not been slow in accepting an invitation for herself and Truth, from the young millionaire, Clarence Vallero, to accompany him on a cruise along the Mediterranean coast, where amid scenes of entrancing beauty, Truth and her handsome host had been daily thrown together.

Gradually the mysterious spell of the sea, the languorous clime and the magnetic personality of her companion, wrought upon the girl's sensitive nature until she at last yielded to her mother's wishes and the impetuous ardor of Vallero's wooing, and consented to become his wife. How quickly time had fled since Truth had given her pledge. The deluge of social



[illegible]

How swiftly the momentous day had arrived, and the hour was fast approaching when she must fulfill her promise. At the thought Truth trembled. "How strangely my heart misgives me—what is this unspeakable dread? Can it be merely the timidity natural to one on such a sacred occasion? No! No! I must confess that I am afraid—horribly afraid—of something I cannot explain. Whenever I am in the presence of Clarence an influence comes over me, something uncanny. I—I feel——"

"Truth, where are you, dear? Clarence is here and waiting for you with the proverbial impatience of a lover," she laughed, going at once to where Truth sat. So direct and unhesitating was her manner that at first glance, one unacquainted with her, would not have detected her infirmity. Faith Morris was blind. The two girls had been inseparable companions during the years of Truth's stay in the school for the blind and in loyal-hearted affection Truth had chosen this dear comrade of her misfortune to be maid of honor, upon what she had fondly hoped to be the happiest day of her life.

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deft touch she passed her hands over the silken robe, shining hair and tear wet face of her friend.

"What! tears at this time, so near the hour of happiness?"

Faith entwined her arms about Truth's beautiful neck and kissed her with sweetest tenderness. But Truth's tears fell thick and fast against the filmy folds of her bridal veil.

For a moment Faith stood in wondering astonishment, then brushing the tears from Truth's wet lashes, she whispered reassuringly: "Ah, love is ever like this, dear heart—they are simply tears of joy." Then as she received no reply—"Speak, dear one, you know that my heart and soul are always open to your most sacred confidence."

"Oh, Faith, Faith, listen to me," Truth burst forth in a voice trembling with emotion, "I feel like one waking from a terrible dream. Help me to think clearly. I feel as though I were about to commit a sacrilege, as if I did not love Clarence well enough to marry him. His love for me is not what my heart and soul crave. Oh, let me tear off the mask of self-deception. Faith, Faith, can't you realize that these tears are the cry of my soul? What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"Truth, my dear little sister, what are you saying? How can I advise you—the time is all too short. Think, dear, in an hour we must be at the church. Oh, Truth, try to calm yourself and think clearly. Are you quite sure this is not a morbid fancy that will pass? Your

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nerves are overwrought with the excitement of the wedding. This sudden revulsion of feeling is not to be trusted."

"No! No! Faith it's not so sudden as you imagine. If only I had given more thought to things that are so vital to a happy union and of which I am so ignorant. Never until my talk with Adoni, after last night's rehearsal, have I given these things the slightest consideration. You know how wise and sympathetic his talks to us at the school always were and with what wonderful insight he is gifted. Last night he seemed to divine that all was not right and counselled me, as my father would have done had he lived, and as my mother should have done, if she was not blinded by the material advantages of this marriage. Love to her has ever been a minor consideration, not permitted to interfere with her worldly ambitions; it would therefore be useless to appeal to her now but I am resolved not to go to the altar without first talking to Clarence about my fears."

"But may they not be groundless? Would it be wise at this late hour? Oh! Truth—dear heart, come, dry your tears; it may be best after all to go to your lover at once and trust him to allay your fears and dismal forebodings."

"The bells! Merciful heavens!"—sighed Truth.

The musical cadence of each peal struck an aching chord in her heart; she trembled and cried out like one in despair: "Oh, God! give me strength in this hour of my trial." Without hesi-

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tating another moment she quickly left the room and entered the one in which Vallero was impatiently awaiting her coming.

Eagerly with outstretched arms he came to meet her. "At last, my darling, my beautiful one, mine alone within the hour." His voice vibrated with a tone of passionate triumph. His eyes devoured her hungrily, then embracing her in his strong arms, he kissed her passionately again and again.

White as death but with the courage born of extremity, Truth resolutely freed herself from his embrace, her eyes meeting his unflinchingly. "Clarence, there is something I must tell you before we take upon ourselves the sacred obligation of the marriage bond.

"Clarence, you can help if you will—be generous and hear me patiently, I implore you. I feel that we have made a grievous mistake, that neither of us have fully realized the solemnity of the step we are about to take. I should never have permitted myself to be unduly influenced in a matter of such vital importance. You, Clarence, are aware of the influence that has been brought to bear upon me; in my ignorance I mistook this fascinating spell for love, which of late has turned into fear—a fear that terrifies me."

"Merely the fanciful creation of a morbid imagination, dearest," interrupted Clarence. "Just now you are a trifle unstrung with all this 'fuss and feathers.' Take my word, sweetheart, when once we are married and quietly settled you will

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laugh at your silly fears; they will vanish like ghosts at the coming of dawn."

"Ah, Clarence, these ghosts will not vanish—they have haunted me day and night. Listen, Clarence, I implore you before it is too late. If we are strong and have the moral courage to brave the world's opinion, our lives need not be ruined; even now there is time to escape from a path that leads to a dangerous precipice."

"If it were, I would rather leap to destruction with my darling in my arms than tread the dull path of life without you. To lose you now, at the last moment, would be unbearable.

"No! Truth, it is too late! Hark! The last call of the bells that is summoning us to the church! Come, kiss me darling, don't you see how unthinkable such a course would be? Dismiss your dire forebodings. You will have nothing to regret in our future life together. Come, sweetheart, look into my eyes and let me hear you say: 'Clarence, I love you.'" His piercing look compelled her gaze, his fingers touched her brow caressingly, his magnetic power overwhelmed her; she grew faint with a delicious languor, then slowly, like a child she repeated the words: "I—love—you—I——"

"Dear children, the carriages are waiting, we must hasten or we shall be late." Her mother's voice aroused Truth from her dazed senses and strange listlessness.

Mrs. Ralston entered with beaming countenance, extending both hands in greeting to Vallero, then turning to Truth: "Why, how pale you are,

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child." She patted her cheeks affectionately and kissed her on the brow. "You surely are not frightened and going to retreat in a panic at the very last minute. Here, take my smelling salts; this will help you." Then she proceeded to adjust the filmy folds of her daughter's bridal veil, quoting lightly the while:

"Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden Bells!

What a world of happiness their harmony foretells."

Turning to the door she called: "Come along, little ones," whereupon Faith, accompanied by a group of laughing bridesmaids and little flower girls, entered. Immediately all was flutter and confusion. Then, for a few moments, Truth buried her face in the blossoms of her bouquet—when she lifted it, a transformation shone out from her averted eyes—she took Vallero's extended arm and together they entered the waiting carriage, followed by the bridal party.

Arriving at the little chapel, the deep-toned organ pealed forth the strains of the wedding march; slowly they advanced to the altar where a man of stately presence greeted them, with grave and gentle dignity. Softly the choir sang the nuptial song. As the rhythmic melody died away, Adoni Bourdaloue raised his head from silent prayer and turned to the fashionable throng that filled the little church to overflowing and solemnly began the marriage service:

. . .

"Friends, you are assembled here to witness the most solemn act that can take place in the

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life of any mortal being. An act which should be consummated only upon the foundation of purest love. A love, that knows its own before it takes upon itself the holy marriage vow.

“True marriage is not the union of bodies, but the union of souls, the most sacred bond of humanity blended with love divine. Without the abiding bond of deep spiritual union; without the holy sanctification of love, which transmutes the desire for physical union into the deeper, more permanent and complete union of soul and body, there can be no real marriage. Love, being the fundamental principle of life, is its own justification. Man ignores and violates this great spiritual law, and turns the holy temple of love into a money changer’s den, profaning this holy of holies with commercialism, making of this priceless treasure a thing to be traded upon; making the marriage relation a cloak for the gratification of unholy desire, dragging the fair name of love through the mire of sensuality.

“Until we learn to regard love reverently, the world will be filled with tragedies. When the holy nature of marriage crystallizes into greater clearness the old idea of proprietorship in another must yield to a saner, more humane, moral and divine attitude of mind.

“We are now in a transitional stage wherein the old thoughts and customs of yesterday and today are in conflict. Let us pray that out of this conflict there will come a state of spiritual understanding of love and truth, expressing fearlessly the aspirations and longings of pure souls.

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"The law of such a love is perfect freedom, suffers no constraint, and refuses to accept an affection not freely and sacredly given. True love does not snatch at the immortal flower of life and in the frenzy of unbridled passion, destroy the bloom and beauty that is rightly undying.

"The laws of love are the most difficult lessons humanity has to learn, and it behooves you, who are about to assume this sacred relationship, to understand and obey these laws so vital and necessary to a true marriage, a union which should be in harmony with God's eternal laws."

An awed stillness held the listening throng as Adoni ceased to speak.

Truth shivered but cast her eyes downward as the solemn words trembled from Adoni's lips. She scarcely heard the responses of Vallero. A cold weight seemed to press upon her heart. It would be her turn to speak next. It was coming. Merciful heaven! How could she go on? A numbness crept over her; then her body swayed slightly. She heard the inexorable voice: "Wilt thou, Truth Ralston, take this man to be thy wedded husband, to love——?"

"Love," she breathed prayerfully. "Oh, God, give me strength to do what is right." Drawn by an irresistible force, she raised her eyes imploringly to those of Adoni Bourdaloue. Their eyes met in a mutual glance of sympathy—she felt its electric thrill penetrate to the depths of her heart—what a revelation at this supreme moment! Vallero's fingers tightened over hers—his head was bent to a level with her own; his

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piercing eyes riveted upon her face. A pause, long and terrible ensued——!

Slowly, the pastor repeated the words, Vallero bending closer to the shivering form, entreated:

"Truth, my darling, try to compose yourself—repeat the words after him." Another ceaseless pause—then, like one in a trance, the toneless voice, falteringly responded: "I, Truth Ralston, take thee, Clarence Vallero——" what followed was vague murmur, with now and then a word distinctly spoken. The last words, "till death do us part," fell on the tense silence like a broken echo. Presently Truth became aware that Vallero was placing the wedding ring upon her finger. Then, another hand was placed upon hers, and the deep voice of Adoni Bourdaloue trembled—! "*What God hath joined together no man can keep asunder.*"

Slowly, the priest raised his hands in benediction, and all was silent, save the murmur of surprise, that ran through the audience, at the change, in the accepted form of marriage words pronounced.

At their close, the organ began to play. Truth leaned on Vallero's arm, and without a tear or smile, passed down the aisle and out of the church, "a wife in name only."

The flood of joyous melody that filled the church at the close of the ceremony was powerless to dispel the tragic gloom that hung like a pall over the assemblage. They gazed into each others faces in consternation. By that quick instinct which takes possession of a multitude at

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great moments, they understood that God's law had been ruthlessly violated; the feeling that they had witnessed a life tragedy was in every heart. Instead of an atmosphere of joy and solemn gladness, the dark portent of sorrow was reflected on each face.

Slowly the guests passed out of the chapel. The golden notes of the organ rose and swelled to a triumphant climax, then gradually they grew softer, fainter and finally died away.

The silence and gloom of the church deepened, drifting shadows filled the little chapel, where alone, the motionless figure of Adoni Bourdaloue was left standing at the altar.

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CHAPTER II

Alone before the altar and before the tribunal of his own conscience the soul of Adoni Bourdaloue was passing through a fiery ordeal. His self-accusation was unsparing. An outraged conscience was passing sentence upon him: "Unworthy! Unworthy! You have been faithless to the high trust reposed in you; have failed in the practice of your daily teachings; have weakly yielded to the conventions of men, when you should have given unswerving allegiance to that divine law about which you so glibly prated."

A keen sense of shame overwhelmed him.

How much easier it was to tell others what to do than to command himself. Had he been true to his convictions he would have refused to unite in marriage these two whom he knew to be wholly unsuited to each other. He should never have permitted himself to be a party to the numberless crimes that are being permitted in the holy name of love; that result in peopling this world with unwelcome children, mere spawn, incapable of carrying out the creative purpose and God's principle of love.

In anguish of spirit, Adoni bowed his head upon the altar and moaned aloud.

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The recollection of the mute appeal that flashed from Truth Ralston's eyes into his soul would haunt him through eternity, the cry of a soul in mortal extremity—and he, a disciple of God, had failed to help her.

That sudden and terrible moment had revealed to him his weakness, leaving his soul uncovered in utter nakedness. He believed himself strong, but now realized in humiliation that no soul is stronger than its weakest attribute.

He scorned to excuse his action with the specious plea so often heard that if he did not marry them some one else would. The world does not want excuses; it needs strong men to brave the world's censure, who can stand calm and unmoved while the storm of its wrath rages about them; and he who professed to be a guide in spiritual things, who possessed the knowledge and marvelous power which men once called miraculous, a power to heal body, soul and mind, had in a moment been rudely shorn of every vestige of authority and influence.

With this power he had restored Truth Ralston's physical blindness but had left her soul in spiritual darkness concerning fundamental principles of life. He now realized that he should have warned her of the consequences of marriage with a man of Vallero's type, whose conquests among women were his boasts, whose God was self-gratification. That he should have remonstrated with her mother, and if needful, should have appealed to Vallero himself. Ah! How well he could discern his duty now when it was too

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late. Oh! God, why had he been so blind; he who had eaten from the tree of knowledge and drank the bitter dregs of disappointment, of loneliness, and unsatisfied yearning in his own loveless marriage!

In the early flush of manhood he had married a woman whose fair outer form had deluded his senses. How bitter had been his awakening from a blind infatuation, when at last the unwelcome truth was forced upon him, that the object of his youthful ardor was wholly selfish and vain! He reflected how at first he had hoped to win her sympathy and co-operation in his work of healing and ministering to earth's unfortunates; had fondly dreamed of high achievements, which together they might accomplish, only to be mocked with the discovery that she was incapable of comprehending, much less of aiding, his lofty ideals.

Ever since his ill-considered marriage he had been striving to adjust his life to an impossible situation; he had sought to fulfill the duties of his high calling and satisfy the exacting demands of a worldly-minded woman in everything that had not involved a principle, and in consequence had frequently found himself in false positions.

The continual concessions to unworthy desires and ambitions of his wife had weakened his moral fibre, shorn him of his strength to cope with the crying needs of his time and had made of him a vacillating creature, incapable of saving a pure soul from the degradation of a loveless marriage.

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From an obscure corner of the church he saw a girlish figure emerge and with faltering steps approach the altar. She was weeping bitterly. Instantly, Adoni was at her side—she lifted her eyes and endeavored to speak, but the sobs choked her utterance.

“Lillian, my child; what brings you here? What is the meaning of those tears? What has happened?”

“Save me! Oh! Save me!” she wailed, and in complete abandon, the girl fell upon her knees with a piteous cry of despair. The child-like figure drooped like a lily when the heat of noontide falls pitilessly upon it.

“Save me! Save me!” she repeated over and over again.

“Lillian, my poor child, arise.” Gently Adoni lifted the crouching figure from the floor. “Speak plainly, little one; calm your fears and tell me from what I can save you——.”

“From my shame and disgrace,” she cried hysterically.

“Shame and disgrace? Child! Oh, child! Shame and disgrace have but one meaning when wrung from a woman’s heart in the frenzy of despair. Lillian, tell me, who is the cause of your misery.”

“No! No! I dare not tell you—I cannot.”

“You must,” commanded Adoni sternly, “so that justice may be done to you—and to——”

“He would kill me if he knew I told.”

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ignorance and sin, prompted by false modesty called 'virtue,' a modesty as absurd as it is tragic!"

Adoni would have doubted Lillian's veracity had he not known that too many mothers were guilty of just such heedlessness in neglecting to instruct their daughters in the dangers of their sex nature.

Stopping again at Lillian's side, while she was still weeping bitterly, Adoni spoke kindly but with decision: "My dear child, you must tell your mother all without delay; she loves you and will comfort you in your hour of trial."

"No! No! I couldn't tell her—she'd be terribly angry and wouldn't understand. She knows nothing about love—does not even love father. No! No! There is no use in telling her—just make Gerald marry me," she cried again, almost groveling at Adoni's feet. Lillian's sobbing was pitiful in the extreme.

In the face of such great wrong, Adoni realized what a weak mortal he was. He felt as though he was beating his head against the world's bars of impenetrable sin. "Peace, peace," he prayed. "Father, show me the way."

"There is only one way," interrupted Lillian in a tragic whisper—"for Gerald to marry me."

Make Gerald marry her! Scarcely had the echo of his vow died away, ere it came to a test. Adoni stood motionless. He must help this poor forsaken girl—he must. Again he lifted his eyes in silent prayer, then laid his hand upon Lillian's head and in a tone of winning compassion tried

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to tell her of that great love that heals every affliction.

She listened in seeming wonderment. It was like beginning the lesson at the close of the chapter.

"Lillian, you may think you love Gerald; that your life would be miserable without him, but your love is for what you believe him to be, rather than for what he really is. When you come to discover that he loves you not; that he is selfish and cares for nothing but to gratify his own pleasure; when you would be compelled to suffer indifference and neglect; to endure his sneering taunts and submit to a mere animal passion, you would soon come to loathe him. Even if he could be prevailed upon to marry you, your life would be an unhappy one and your children, born under wrong conditions, would bring you no blessing."

Adoni was well aware that the world would censure him for the unusual advice he was giving Lillian; that it would misjudge his motives but it was to be the first step toward his Calvary. Henceforth it should be his portion to be maligned and misunderstood. So be it. Was the servant better than the Master? His first duty was to save this poor child from plunging into the hell that encompasses a despised and unloved wife; he would not advise her to sacrifice the last shred of self-respect, for mere creature comfort and the world's approval. He would lead her out of the dark wilderness of ignorance and sin and guide her into the light of truth and understanding.

A Vision of Truth



"Lillian, there is but one way of helping you out of your difficulty."

"Oh, can you—will you?" In eager expectancy Lillian leaned forward. "People say that you can perform miracles, that——."

"Never mind what people say," interrupted Adoni. "No child, it requires no miracle to save you. My mission is to save life; not to destroy it; to restore health and strength to body, soul and mind. When you understand that it was through your lack of knowledge and disobedience that you have done what in your inmost heart you felt to be wrong, you will shrink from any sinful action that may seem to offer escape. Remember this: there is never any honorable escape from the consequences of our misdeeds."

"But I am not the only one to blame."

"Gerald cannot escape; he must render account to the last farthing. His sin is far greater than yours, so will be his punishment. Let God be the judge. And now you must trust me, child and take my advise; the time will come when you will be grateful that Gerald would not marry you."

"But what is it you advise me?"

"First, to tell your mother everything."

"Oh! How can I tell her? I—she——"

"Have no fear, my child. I, myself, will tell her. Come, let us go to her without delay." Adoni consulted his watch. Taking Lillian by the hand, he said kindly: "Come, it is already growing late." With these words he led the weeping child from the church.

The sky was overcast with dark, threatening

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clouds. As they hastened along Adoni pondered how he might arouse Lillian's mother to a sense of her sacred obligation to her daughter. At this moment the thought occurred to him: How strange that the girl sought him in her trouble instead of her own father confessor, for he now remembered that her people were adherents of the Roman Catholic church.

"Lillian, tell me, why did you come to me? Why did you not go to Father Gebhard for advice?"

"Oh! I am afraid of him. He is so stern and unsympathetic. I was afraid he would make me do public penance. He can't perform miracles, either; besides, Gerald isn't a Catholic, you know. Father Gebhard has no love for any one who is not a Catholic and he has no mercy for them."

Arriving at the home of Lillian, Adoni tactfully explained to her mother the purpose of his errand. He had known the woman but slightly and believed her to be kind and well meaning, if somewhat inclined to shirk responsibilities. She, like many others, seemed to think her duty began and ended with the formal observance of religious devotions.

After the first shock, following the painful disclosure of Lillian's plight, the mother, as Adoni feared, took a decided stand against him as to what was right and best to do in this serious matter.

"Of course you don't want Gerald to marry Lillian, for he's your wife's brother. It's natural

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you don't want her in your family," she exclaimed with vehemence.

"I fully expected you would mistake my motive," replied Adoni, "but that is of little consequence. The question is: Would this forced marriage be advisable? Lillian and Gerald do not love each other. They've been brought up along different lines of religious, and social advantages—education. Even in their tastes and habits they have little in common. They do not understand each other. Gerald is incapable of real affection, has little respect for women; certainly none for Lillian whom he would treat with scorn and indifference, if not with actual cruelty.

She would be slavishly dependent upon him; their future would resolve itself into open antagonism and degrading animalism. What kind of a home would that be for Lillian and her child?"

"It would, at least, give the child a name and save it from disgrace."

"Giving one child a name and bringing the curse of degenerating influence upon others born of an unholy relation! To condemn these two lives together, into an artificial union, and force their antagonistic natures into the formal straight-jacket of a loveless marriage, would be a social crime for private ends. The price is too great."

"Lillian's mother burst into tears. "But her reputation will be ruined," she cried.

"My dear woman, there are things of more sterling worth than a mere name. Self-respect, courage, moral stamina, honesty. As for disgrace—reputation, after all, is what people

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"I cannot understand," cried Lillian's mother, "what possessed the child to forget herself. I have always tried to be so good and virtuous. She certainly didn't get it from me."

Lillian's mother flushed guiltily. "I thought—I supposed she would find out these things as other girls do."

"Your condemnation seems cruelly harsh."

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"The only conventional remedy," replied Adoni indignantly, "but this remedy that society provides does not prevent nor remove the sin of ignorance."

"Gerald. I have no desire to shield him from the results of his crime and shall compel him to support and educate his child. It is for Lillian's sake, that I oppose this loveless union; for it violates the sanctity of the holy marriage bond, which I have vowed to protect and defend, now and forever."

Realizing that for the present nothing more could be accomplished in the matter, Adoni took his leave.

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the outcome of his contemplated interview would be God alone knew. In the silence of that great "within" Adoni prayed—prayed for guidance to do what was right, prayed as he never had before. His prayer breathed the desire and highest aspiration of a struggling soul, held in mortal bondage.

As though in answer to his earnest petition, a voice from within his heart dictated these words:

X "This above all: To thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

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CHAPTER III

At midnight a heavy rain was falling, fitful flashes of lightning cleft the dark clouds asunder, their lurid glare revealing a ghostly sky line against the sombre curtain of the night. Flickering lights cast spectral shadows along the deserted thoroughfares, tall trees writhed and twisted in the fierce grasp of the wind that careened howling and shrieking through the streets. The rain dashed in torrents against the buildings of a great city, and the water rushed in noisy turbulence along the smooth pavement. It was a night to daunt the stoutest heart from braving its fury but its tempestuous wrath had no terrors for one lonely wanderer.

Truth Ralston was fleeing from an unspeakable horror; on and on she sped, battling the raging elements. A nameless fear which shook her very being into active revolt was urging her along.

In sheer desperation she held her course, until at last, well nigh exhausted, drenched with rain, her mantle clinging in dank folds about her, she reached her mother's home. The house was in darkness. With her own key Truth unlocked the massive door and entered the dimly lit hall of her mother's home—and only haven of refuge.

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Casting aside her wet mantle, she stole noiselessly to her mother's apartment. Finding her fast asleep, Truth leaned over her and whispered in agony: "Mother! Mother! Can you hear me!"

"Oh, Mother! Mother dear!" she cried in a voice of despair, "wake, wake, it is I—Truth." Mrs. Ralston opened her eyes and gazed at Truth in utter amazement, then springing from bed she cried in astonishment: "Truth Ralston! What in heaven's name brings you home!"

For a few moments Truth looked at her mother wildly, then with a sob threw her arms around her neck, striving for coherent utterance. She choked—faltered, then whispered brokenly: "Help me, mother dear, to understand. Am I awake or asleep? Everything seems like a horrible nightmare."

"Ever since I left the church I've been scarcely conscious of what I was doing. I could not stay longer in that house with him; he's vile, wicked. He uses some unnatural power to control my will; some evil influence haunts me at every move. I tried to escape it and ran from the house. Oh, mother, I am horribly afraid of him."

"Truth, what in the world are you talking about? Are you in a delirium? What wild raving! Sheer nonsense! You must be mad to come here alone at this hour of the night. Child, what have you done?"

"Mother, listen; try to comprehend this terrible, almost inconceivable truth. I've been hypnotized."

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Mrs. Ralston raised her hands in protesting disbelief.

"Yes, mother. I know it now. I have felt it vaguely for some time, but today—tonight—I realize and can explain this dazed feeling which paralyzes my will. Oh, mother, it's intolerable. When I'm under this spell I'm not myself; not a conscious individual, but a mere creature under the domination of evil desire. Oh! The very thought of it makes me shudder. Mother! Can't you understand?"

"Do you expect me to understand your disordered imagination? Why do you display such an amazing state of mind by coming home in this manner? How did you get here? Where is Clarence?"

"I don't know." Truth passed her hands across her brow with a gesture of bewildered recollection.

"I scarcely remember what it was that awakened me. I think it was the storm. I know there was a terrific crash—a blinding light. I felt a shock which seemed to rouse me with a sudden wave of apprehension. I realized that I must flee instantly from Clarence Vallero. I rushed downstairs, out of the house into the stormy night and fled from him, never to return again."

"Indeed you shall," exclaimed Mrs. Ralston angrily. "You shall return immediately, and I will go with you. Do you think that I shall permit you to bring public scandal upon us, all for a morbid fancy? Truth, you must be mad

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Slowly Truth sank upon her knees and bowed her head in silent prayer. After a few moments she arose quickly. Like one receiving an inspiration the thought of Adoni flashed upon her mind.

He would understand; he would sympathize with and help her. She hastened to the telephone and rang continuously; it seemed like ages before her call was heard—but at last the voice of Adoni sounded in her ears. "Hello, this is Truth Ralston speaking; I'm at mother's; do you understand? At mother's. Can you come here at once? I need a friend." "What?" "Please come at once." "Yes, yes." "Please do; don't ring; I shall watch for you and let you in."

Scarcely had Truth hung up the receiver when the phone gave a prolonged ring. "Clarence," she cried in dismay; the thought of him made her shudder; on and on it rang insistently but Truth made no movement to answer but walked swiftly into the reception hall to await the coming of Adoni.

Hastily Mrs. Ralston came from the dressing room, saying, "That must be Clarence; I will talk with him:" "Yes." "Mrs. Ralston." "Yes, Truth is here; I believe she's ill. No, no, don't come in the car; it would rouse the servants. Be patient, Clarence; we will leave here quietly in a few minutes; you can meet us outside. What? If you get here first you can wait for us on the porch. All right, good-bye."

Truth scarcely breathed while listening to her mother's conversation, who, without noticing her, went hastily back to finish her toilet. A few

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minutes more and her mother would be prepared to start should the storm cease. Oh, if it would only increase in violence—if not—she must think of something else to delay their departure; she must gain time. She saw her mother descending the stairs, all clad for their journey.

In a moment Truth was at her side. "Mother, I'm chilled through and through; my garments are soaked." She thrust forward her little slippered foot, soiled and dripping. "See my feet; they are so cold."

"Mercy! It will be a miracle if you're not sick abed from this dreadful exposure. Here, drink this." She handed Truth a glass of brandy which she drank obediently. "There now, hurry to your room and change your clothing at once."

In an incredibly short time she had changed her garments. Without a sound she descended the stairs and glided into the hall, near the window, listening for Adoni. He must be coming every minute; she listened again and heard footsteps approaching. Then a firm tread upon the porch. Truth hastened to open the door and in another moment Adoni was standing beside her, grasping her extended hands.

The agony in her eyes, to his searching look of inquiry, told the story.

In brief, tragic sentences Truth explained the circumstances that compelled her to seek his assistance. Upon her declaration that Clarence Vallero had exercised hypnotic influence upon her, a look of comprehension dawned in his eyes.

"Yes, Truth, I understand all now and I have

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Tear-stained eyes looked into Adoni's with gratitude as her trembling voice whispered: "I shall trust you as I do God."

"Adoni Bourdaloue," she cried in undisguised consternation.

"It means," interposed Adoni, "that your daughter was compelled to seek my protection from the cruelty of her husband and your insisting that she return to this man against whom she brings such grave charges. Therefore, I take the liberty to ask you why you assume this antagonistic spirit toward your own child?"

"Pardon me, madam, I have a right to defend the weak against injustice, and protect innocence and purity from degradation."

"I assure you there is no occasion for such heroic measures in this case and you will show discretion by allowing us to manage a strictly family affair ourselves."

"I can assure you, Mrs. Ralston, that unnatural and dangerous unions are no longer considered strictly family affairs. It becomes the duty of society to protect itself from such marriages. You doubtless are aware that the ancient

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morality which made a woman the servile property of her husband is obsolete, and that Clarence Vallero has committed a moral crime, which nullifies whatever legal right he possessed over your daughter."

"And you believe that absurdity? I'm astonished that you, above all, should give the slightest credence to my daughter's imagination. The girl is overwrought; she doesn't realize what she is saying."

"You would be more correct, madam, if you said that she did not realize what she was saying during the marriage ceremony. Now, for a moment, let us consider this serious question which you are pleased to term 'A vagary of Truth's imagination.' To me, who had the opportunity of closely observing the strange demeanor of Truth and Vallero during the ceremony, I certainly feel that her charges against him are well-founded. Surely, Mrs. Ralston, you have been aware of something unusual in their manners."

"As I said before, Truth was nervous and badly frightened, as many girls are on their wedding day."

"Mrs. Ralston, I have officiated at many weddings and am familiar with what they call the ordinary stage fright of girls but I can assure you this was of a far different nature, a serious one, so that at one moment I was on the verge of discontinuing the service, for it was then I beheld a 'soul in torture.' I regret exceedingly that I lacked the moral courage to do what, in my heart, I felt to be my duty.

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then swayed. She would have fallen but for Adoni, who was at her side in a moment, supporting her with his strong arms. Taking her hand in his reassuring clasp he soothingly said: "Have no fear, no power on earth shall compel you to return to Clarence Vallero against your own will."

"Mrs. Ralston," said Adoni, in a tone of resolute determination, "I hardly think the gentleman in question will care to wait until your daughter is ready to join him. She certainly will not do so tonight and it might be well to acquaint him with the fact."

"There will be no necessity for doing so," exclaimed the mocking voice of Vallero, who had crept stealthily up the stairs, appearing in the doorway, and with ill-concealed wrath continued mockingly: "A thousand pardons for intruding. May I take the liberty to ask the Reverend Mr. Bourdaloue who authorized him to assume the management of this affair?"

"I did." The words fell tremblingly from Truth's lips. The sudden appearance of Vallero struck a chill of terror into her inmost being—her face blanched, becoming tense with the effort to repress the wild emotion within her heart—a silent moment elapsed before she became master over her feelings—then, submitting to a superior will, calmly replied: "The Reverend Mr. Bourdaloue came here at my urgent request."

"Yes," interposed Mrs. Ralston eagerly, "I had nothing to do with it. Truth telephoned without my knowledge and I can assure you,

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as if trying to support herself in this terrible ordeal through which she was passing. The sudden and unexpected reply of Vallero startled her. She retreated quickly, regarding him with fascinated fear as he advanced toward her with outstretched arms, his eyes glowing like coals of fire into hers. They seemed to sear her brain and shrivel her soul. She made a supreme effort to withdraw her gaze from him but she was powerless to do so. She became oblivious to everything, save those fiery orbs that glowed and gleamed about her. Her delirious spirit was fanned into raging flames, consuming her very being; everything faded from her vision. She heard nothing but a voice, sweet, persuasive and insistent, saying:

"Truth, dear one, come to me, poor frightened little girl; come, darling, into my arms, nothing shall harm you. You know I love you, sweetheart, and always will; come now, dearest; come and kiss me once again."

Truth in blind obedience moved mechanically in the direction from whence that irresistible sound came, her slow movements toward Vallero being followed by a death-like stillness that was broken only by the deep, passionate breathing of Vallero as he reached forth to embrace the quivering form beside him.

"Come, darling."

"Stop!" A voice low and powerful vibrated through the painful silence.

The voice of Adoni seemed to permeate her whole being and awakened her soul with impelling

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tenseness of the situation was at last broken by Adoni.

"You are at liberty, Clarence Vallero, to use all the force of which you are capable on me, but beware that the weapon you have chosen does not rebound and slay the slayer."

White with rage, Vallero raised his hand to strike Adoni—but—an invisible force held his arm inert—and immovable—his quivering frame betrayed that he strove with all his strength to stir—to speak—but could do neither. His chest heaved convulsively; his distorted face became blanched; his gaze wandered aimlessly around until it rested on Adoni who continued to hold him in his power. Comprehending fear widened Vallero's eyes. For a few moments Adoni regarded him with compassionate keenness, then with a quick gesture of command, released this weak, struggling creature from mortal agony.

A dark flush suffused Vallero's face; the nerveless arm dropped at his side, then as if the scales had dropped from his eyes they gleamed malignantly, and stared silently at Adoni with the look of a man who had lost his conscious power of evil.

There was a quiet expression of triumph upon Adoni's face at the realization of his victory, yet he felt a great pity in his heart for the man that stood like a criminal before him.

"Clarence Vallero, you perceive at this time that it is quite useless to attempt deception regarding the 'moral suasion' you employ. You

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"Only a cowardly cur like yourself would make use of a lady's name to shield himself. Henceforth, I warn you, never to refer to Mrs. Bourdalone again or I might be tempted to again defend myself from your covert insinuation." Adoni paused, then turning apologetically to Mrs. Ralston and Truth who were standing somewhat apart: "I realize that this has been a severe trial for both of you but circumstances rendered it necessary. I feel that our acts were justified in demonstrating that it was not merely an illusion which caused your daughter this horrible torture of body, mind and soul."

The abject weariness and the drawn expression on the pale face of Mrs. Ralston gave evidence that her habitual poise and self-assurance had deserted her. Her trembling voice betrayed an inward emotion she scarcely could suppress as she falteringly began to speak:

"It's all very strange and mystical. I do not know what to think or believe. First, the wedding, which in spite of all my plans was such a dismal failure. Then, in the dead of the night, through this terrible storm Truth comes home, in the most disgraceful manner with startling accusations, followed by the strange, weird phenomena enacted in this tragic scene. These things have so wrought upon me that I am incapable of coherent thought and I cannot decide upon any definite plan to-night."

As she looked at Vallero a feeling of contempt crept into her heart, and she could not disguise

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"Clarence, after all these strange and perplexing events, you must certainly see the painful position in which I am placed. Give me time to think. Leave Truth with me tonight; the poor child is really ill and she needs rest and the attention of a doctor. To-morrow we will talk matters over and arrange whatever seems best for the future. Be careful to let no one suspect anything wrong. Truth's illness will be sufficient explanation for the present and now we must bid you good-night."

“Meddling fool,” he exclaimed bitterly. “You will repent your devilish interference; beware ‘he laughs best who laughs last.’” In his tone of voice there was a vibrant note of revenge. He quickly left the house, slamming the door with a force which betrayed his outraged feelings.

“Thank God!” She exclaimed, looking at Adoni with tears of gratitude in her eyes. “How can I ever thank you sufficiently for the great

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CHAPTER IV

It was ten o'clock before Adoni descended to the breakfast room, a late hour for him, who was accustomed to rising with the dawn. The manifold duties of a large parish made it necessary for him to be about at an early hour. On this morning he had purposely delayed breakfasting that he might join his wife, who rarely rose before ten o'clock, as all her social diversions kept her out late. Therefore her breakfast was served any time to suit her pleasure. It was a meal they seldom shared in common, accordingly it was with considerable surprise that Frances greeted her husband. "Really, this is an unexpected pleasure," she exclaimed wonderingly, advancing with indolent grace and seating herself opposite him at the table.

"It must be something exceptionally urgent that induces you to waste so much valuable time at home—or is it——," looking quizzically at him, "that I have been guilty of something more atrocious than usual and you are going to lecture me?"

"That would indeed be a waste of time," Adoni replied with a grave smile. "No, Frances, it is not to discuss your affairs that I have remained. There are other matters quite as important that

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her college town, was as nearly in love as her self-centered nature was capable to express, and her only desire was to subjugate the modest young student, whom she resolved to make blush and tremble like the veriest school-girl before the invincible power of her beauty, which was as wine to his senses. He suddenly found himself in the grasp of a titanic force, huge and fateful to the calm-divinity scholar.

Adoni Bourdaloue was captivated by physical beauty and like a man delirious with the glory of the sensation, was carried down the rapids into the great stream of life. Before the end of the summer he became engaged to the pretty maiden and married her the day after graduation. There followed a brief period of sensuous delight which usually ends in satiety, and which, if not deeply rooted in unselfish love, congenial temperament and intellectual equality, is sure to result in dissolution and disappointment.

Soon after leaving college Adoni was assigned to a remote little village in the mountains, where people were poor, ignorant and apathetic. The squalid monotony of their lives was filled with the daily grind of dull routine, pitiful tragedies and abject misery. There was no fashionable society and scarcely a man in the village whose admiration Frances coveted.

Soon, very soon, she began to fret and fume at the narrowness and obscurity of life in this remote corner of the earth.

Adoni realize her position and was infinitely patient with her, spending hours of time

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that should have been given to his work, in contriving some pleasure or interest that might brighten the days for her. Vainly he appealed to her sympathy in the needs and trials of the parish folk but being naturally indolent and extravagant herself, there was nothing of value she could teach to them had she manifested the inclination.

At last Adoni gave up his bitter task; his hopes of a true helpmate had vanished and finally addressed himself with redoubled zeal to his work, which afforded little time to brood over his own disheartening affairs.

The young Reverend Adoni Bourdaloue put his whole soul into each day's demands; preaching, teaching, laboring with hand and heart, seeking by word and deed to strengthen, to uplift, guide and sustain their first feeble beginning in the new life he had awakened in his humble flock. Soon his fame began to spread abroad, his fiery eloquence and his wonderful power as a spiritual healer began to be sought beyond the confines of the village. Ere long, he was called to a larger charge, then to another, until at length his fame demanded the bishop to summon him to the city and give into his charge, the large, fashionable parish of St. Paul's, of which he was still the rector.

Here, Frances was in her element, using her position as a leverage to advance herself socially.

From the beginning she disclaimed the duties and responsibilities usually associated with the wife of a clergyman but instead identified herself

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Adoni's face flushed but he answered calmly. 'Yes, more to say about Gerald and much more in regard to our own affairs. Matters that must be settled at once, and for all time. You will kindly keep your seat and hear what I have to say, so that you may be able to choose just what to do?'

"You already know my ideas on marriage, so we will not discuss that."

"You will do me justice to admit that it is through no word or action of mine that people are aware of the true state of affairs between us, which I regret very much but if it is your idea, that because they know of our unfortunate relation that I must forbear to warn others against a like fate then I must disagree with you."

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ing to her gently laying his hand upon her head, "why will you be so perverse? Try to understand and consider my side of the case. Can you not see that I cannot go on being placed in a false position? That I must preach and above all, must live my convictions? Listen, dear, I have been thinking everything over very seriously and know that we cannot go on this way any longer; at least I cannot. There must be a re-adjustment and I had thought, Frances, that we might take this little child of Gerald's into our home, into our hearts; you, perhaps, would learn to love it—and that love would create, no doubt, a holy desire of motherhood in you. Then everything would be transformed between us, if we had children of our own, and saw our features blended in tender beauty upon a baby face. Our hearts would be linked with sad experiences and shared responsibilities, which would change this tie that binds us into a true marriage bond, and help us, if not to regain our lost paradise, to attain at least a more peaceful and harmonious relation."

Adoni ceased to speak for a few moments, watching Frances with eager intentness. Her face flushed and her eyes flashed into his an angry look of defiance, revealing the attitude of mind. Her voice trembled as she began. "I thought that subject was settled between us. How many times must I impress upon your mind that if you wanted merely a housekeeper or some one to bear you children, you should have married a woman of the 'common garden variety'—but instead you chose me, who could have kings of the

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financial world at her feet; artists raving over my beauty and begging to paint my portrait.

"You feign to ignore all this and consider what you are pleased to call an artificial bond between us from your view. You forget entirely that I have a reputation to maintain and do not propose to sacrifice my health and beauty, bearing and rearing children—children—children indeed! Great heavens, there are too many in the world as it is; neglected and ill-trained waifs, thousands that——"

"Need a home," interrupted Adoni, "and I had fondly hoped that you would be willing to give one of the unfortunate ones a home."

"You mean the illegitimate offspring of that impudent girl? Never, I repeat that I absolutely refuse to have anything to do with this matter. You will please excuse me now for my dressmaker is waiting for me."

"Your dressmaker will wait," said Adoni peremptorily, barring her exit and motioning her to a seat with an authoritative gesture, which she obeyed reluctantly. "Frances, you shall now listen to all I have to say before you leave this room. You refuse to be interested in Gerald's affairs—so be it then—but henceforth I wish to have you understand that you will not be permitted to interfere with mine. You shall, in the first place, not be allowed to involve me in debt by maintaining an establishment beyond our means. You will be obliged to curtail the expense of your wardrobe, at least to half of your former allowance, for I shall never prostitute

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templated her husband through half-closed lashes, as a veiled glance with mirthful mockery parted her rosy lips with a roguish laugh.

"Why not pronounce my sentence 'hard labor' or 'solitary confinement' on bread and water? No use dealing in half measures," she averred, with light raillery. Then rising and gliding with the soundless grace of a kitten to the side of Adoni, she placed her arms lovingly around his neck and continued teasingly: "You absurd boy, you never were cast for the role of a bluebeard. Has it ever occurred to you, that you take yourself just a trifle too seriously? Why do you talk as if it were unpardonable sin to enjoy life——?"

"To enjoy life is the birthright of every man and woman. It is only when we desert our true selves, deny our duty and seek to attend pleasure and enjoyment, bought at the price of disloyalty to higher obligations that they become dangerous and invariably turn to dust and ashes."

Frances remained silent for a few moments as if deeply impressed by his words. When she began to speak her tones had in them a note of proud tenderness.

"How grandly you put things, dear; you're a born preacher. Don, I can at least be proud of you, even if I can't agree and live up to your high ideals.

"I think I understand now what you mean when you said that pleasure is all right if it comes unsought and not bought at the cost of honor and duty. Am I not right, dear? Well then, listen. I have a perfectly unsolicited pleasure

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defending himself against her criticism. "Do you not understand that there is a divine love; a love for all humanity? A love that reaches out to all struggling souls, a love unselfish and impersonal, that yearns to succor the weak, aid the needy, heal the sick and lift the fallen? I cannot refuse comfort and counsel to women just because they are women—whom I love first of all, as souls to be awakened to their mission in life and the true meaning of love—not generated as you think by earthly desires."

Frances, to Adoni's surprise, nestled closer to him, carefully concealing the scornful smile that curved her lips. She slipped her round, white arm about his neck, bending his head down until her lips were close to his ear, into which she whispered passionately:

"Keep that kind of love for them, but—Oh! Don, dear, hold me in your arms and love me as you did in the dear old days gone by. We were happy then. Oh! so happy, happier than I have ever been since, or ever will be again, until you look at me in the same sweet way and tell me that you love me.

"Oh, Don, don't turn away from me—come, come, sweetheart—give me your lips that I may kiss them."

Her voice trembled with agitation—her flushed face quivering with emotion, was close to his, her wavy hair prettily disheveled, brushed his cheeks and fell in clusters about her shoulders.

She clung to his neck desperately. Adoni tried to think calmly, tried in vain to release

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gently bent it backward until he could look deep into her eyes, his own filling with tears as his voice trembled with a holy passion.

"Frances, little wife, promise me now to sin no more, against yourself and nature and that you will no longer deny the holy claim of motherhood, or sin against yourself and the divine creator. I have asked this of you many times; I now ask it again. Promise, sweetheart, will you?"

Frances trembled, a guilty flush crept over her face, her breath came in quick, uneven gasps, her eyes wavered and fell before the tender pleading of his own; in vain she struggled to release herself from his passionate embrace, crying with a tremor of agitation: "You are cruel, Don, remorseless, your eyes drag the very soul from me."

"Your soul, Frances. Yes, your soul I am trying to reach; give me that love——."

"I give it to you," interjected Frances in a low, muffled tone. "Love, the glowing dream of ecstasy that was ours at first I offer you again. I offer you beauty for which men kill themselves. Look at me, blind, foolish man; the woman does not live who is fairer than I and yet you will persist and demand this one thing I can not and will not grant. If you were generous and loved me you would not require this sacrifice."

"Sacrifice——?" Moved apparently by sudden impulse, Adoni's arms relaxed their hold and fell from about her quivering form, the look of passion fled from his dark, handsome face, shadowing

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lips as Frances sprang to her feet and faced him with a fiery look in her eyes.

"Fool," she hissed, "poor blind fool, to reproach me of vanity and prate to me of love—divine love; divine slush! I'm disgusted with the whole bunch of hypocrites, hiding their shameless infatuation under the cloak of your lofty ideals. Let me tell you that I believe that you are no better than any other man who allows the women to hang around him, listening with rapture to the pearls of wisdom falling from your lips, preaching the freedom of love. May I ask what freedom your love gives me? What do you offer me? The colorless life of a household slave—that is all. To bear children at your caprice; to sacrifice——"

"Enough!"

Adoni's voice rang out with evident finality: "You have sacrificed the holiest gift God created for every woman. That which is given in pure love is no sacrifice but the greatest happiness and joy of heaven. You have forsaken all these blessings and with it have severed the last link that held my soul in bondage."

"Do I understand you rightly, that we are free from each other?"

"Yes, at last you understand. Henceforth our paths of life shall separate. We are worlds apart."

"Very well," she replied haughtily. "I shall be able to manage nicely without the powerful magic of your name and the hypocritical disguise of your soul's ideals. They make me sick. The whole thing is a farce."

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"At this moment I can choose among twenty more exalted in station and more powerful than this little simple, deluded man to whom I now say good-bye,"

Frances started to leave the room with a bitter laugh that made Adoni's blood run cold. On the threshold she turned to him with blazing eyes:

"It may interest you to learn that I have already accepted a charming invitation to go to Paris. I sail next week. It is not likely we shall meet again. Au revoir."

With these last words the woman he once called wife went out of his home and life forever.

Adoni stood motionless where Frances had left him. A deep sense of gratitude welled in his heart for his deliverance. This last painful scene had been the supreme test of his strength. How nearly he had yielded again to her baneful fascination. But for the call of childish voices he might have fallen again, a victim to his passion, duped into another vain and futile compromise.

Adoni was one of those who believe that nothing happens by chance; that the universe is governed by the unerring law of cause and effect. That a divine purpose manifests itself through all phenomena. He had no doubt that their marriage, fruitless as it seemed, served a great lesson for both.

He felt debased and humiliated at the thought of his own weakness; for years he had overrated his strength as he had underrated

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hers. He now knew she had a will as strong as her purpose. He wondered sadly if anything but a great overmastering sorrow would ever bring the vain, wayward woman to the realization of her parasitic existence. She had deliberately chosen to commercialize her beauty, and had chosen her path where those of her kind say, "Evil be thou my good."

Adoni went to the open window and breathed in the pure sunlit air and closed his eyes in silent meditation.

"It takes great strength to live where you belong,
When other people think that you are wrong,
People you love, who love you, and whose approval
Is a pleasure; and succeed at length
In living your belief. Well, it takes strength."

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CHAPTER V

Adoni was seated in his study. Upon his desk were heaped the usual pile of mail; letters of all description asking for his assistance, financially, spiritually and physically.

Suddenly his face lighted with pleasure as he detected the familiar addressed envelope of his sister Martha, who lived with his widowed mother in the foot-hills of the Adirondacks, where Adoni was born. With eager haste he opened the letter and read:

"You dear old brother: This is to thank you for the lovely long letter and the books; they both proved such delightful reading. You are always doing the right thing at the right time. I hope you will live up to this reputation by coming home this vacation; it's heavenly up here on the mountainside. A few resorters have already arrived in the village. Both Frances and you will find enough diversion to satisfy every reasonable requirement. If you cannot come for the whole summer, come for a time at least. Mother is not so well, though she does not admit it. But, Oh! Don, I cannot blind myself to her increasing weakness. With each day she seems to grow frailer, more spiritual. She loves to go into the silence; upon three occasions I have

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discovered her in a trance-like state. When awakened, she quieted my fears by the calm assurance that she had merely been on a journey. Once to the great Adept, and twice she avers that she visited you. She seems to be greatly troubled about you, Don, and feels that you are facing a great trial. She has written a letter, which I am to give you in case she passes over suddenly. Oh! Brother, I know I must bear it and I try to be brave and cheerful but my heart is heavy. Come if you can; it will make us both so happy. Mother is counting the days until your vacation begins and is just holding on by sheer will until you come. With loads of love and kisses from both of us. Your unhappy sister, Martha."

As Adoni finished the letter a great anxiety crept into his heart. He was more alarmed by the appealing message of his sister than he cared to admit. He consulted his watch. It was ten o'clock; the train left at five which would bring him to the village about midnight. He resolved to go. Hastily he proceeded to examine the other communications, when the door burst imperiously open and Father Gebhard burst wrathfully into the room.

"Father Gebhard!" cried Adoni, wondering at such an intrusion.

Father Gebhard was usually the most considerate of conventional requirements of any man he knew, but now he had entered boldly, without so much as a tap.

"Don't Father me," thundered the priest in tones of denunciation, his face red and hot from

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“Hold, Father, hold,” commanded Adoni, now master of himself entirely. “‘Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.’ On what grounds do you base your fearful accusation?”

"I am strongly opposed to marriages of that kind."

“What is God’s most holy marriage law?” questioned Adoni in low, even tones, bending on the priest a piercing look of challenge.

"Can the sanction of the church protect a woman from subjection to a man's sensual desire, when he cares nothing for the spiritual love that should govern all true marriages?"

"Nor do I; it is in the interest of justice and morality that I contend against the union."

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"Then permit me to say that your ideas of justice and morality do not coincide with mine. And I am here to see that justice is done. The girl is as good as he is; why shouldn't he be made to marry her?"

"Lillian is entirely too good for my brother-in-law, who I am sorry to say, is as unfit to be the husband of any woman, as he is to have the care and training of a child."

"The church will look after the child's moral training."

"Doubtless, as it looked after its mother's training."

"The church is not responsible for the willful perversity of her children."

"I deny that it was perversity as much as ignorance on Lillian's part. However, the point I wish to make clear is that the child and its mother will be better off without the marriage."

"That is simply a pretext. I understand your objection, of course, but the child must be provided for and Lillian must have the protection of its father's name."

"His name will not protect her from his scorn and neglect; from his lustful passion or from the danger from infection and the demoralizing effect of continual association with a libertine. To me the dangers to which Lillian would be exposed in marriage with Gerald, are far greater and more fatal in their consequences than those from which his name would shield her."

"But she risked those dangers before marriage and I fail to see how, having a legal claim upon

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the man, would increase them. If she suffers, it is the just penalty she incurred by her own sin—woman is the evil temptress.”

“So you believe that old Adam and Eve story too, do you?”

Adoni raised his arm and pointed the finger of scorn at the man who thus desecrated womanhood.

“Let me tell you now, that woman came to man pure and holy—God’s greatest gift and how has he received her?” Adoni’s face was white like marble and his eyes glowed like two living coals of fire. “How, I say?” he demanded, throwing his body forward in a posture of intensity. “How, I ask, has he accepted the gift? he has laid his own sin upon her and like the coward that he is, has preyed upon her credulity in his interpretation of the depravity of mankind. God! How man has polluted woman. But never, until woman resurrects herself from her own degraded condition and lifts man up to a higher and holier sphere, will this world be any better than it is today, and the time will come when she will realize that woman’s highest mission on earth is to redeem man from unholy desires.”

Father Gebhard moved restlessly upon his chair and cleared his throat. “Let us get back to business. You will no doubt agree with me, that the best way to settle this question about Lillian will be, to have our church make a moral relation of that, which has been previously immoral.”

“No external power, civil or religious, can

[illegible]

"But," exclaimed the priest with plausibility, "the wrong has been done and the offspring resulting therefrom, constitutes the living bond between the parents which the church would simply ratify, thus protecting the innocent child from its parent's sin."

"Are you actually permitted to talk such demoralizing stuff among your parishioners?"

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"Sin" sneered Farther Gebhard with a chuckle, "I thought you did not believe in woman's sin."

"Ignorance is sin. Your church is full of it; full of corruption."

"Stop!" With uplifted hand and dignified authority the priest drew himself to his full height and spoke impressively. "Our holy Catholic church is the world's greatest champion of purity and morality, eternally vigilant, warning, counselling, admonishing the faithful against impure thoughts and immodest action. She points with pardonable pride to the glorious purity of the saints of her celibate priest and sisterhood; to the safeguard which her confessional affords; and her invincible stand against the evil of divorce through which scandals and domestic miseries are prevented, and happiness generally secured, and the weaker sex and children protected."

"Yet, in spite of all your admonition and the suppression of scandal and crime, it does not prove that secretly it does not exist. Prison records show proportionally as great a percentage of Catholic as Protestant criminals. I fail to see how your church claims the championship of morality, Why does it erect cloisters wherein to martyrize the body? Is that not a sin in itself?"

"We celebrate our chief triumphs in fleeing the temptations of the body; we despise matter and deliver spirit from its bonds."

"You ignore what God has put on you and all men; a material habitation for spirit to dwell in, a body wonderful in perfection, not to be regarded as a prison house a thing of evil, made to suffer

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discomfort and chastisement. I am well aware that these temples of the spirit have often become the scene of noisy orgies, of gross materialism and that many of the greatest heroes who sought to eliminate the last vestige from their earthly lives, have died broken-hearted, wasted, defeated, with a confession on their lips that this frightful conflict between body and soul was a delusion."

"But what of those who did triumph over matter; that a few have failed is not a sound argument against the ideal?"

"The ideal is false, for he who separates spirit from matter defames God who created both and pronounced them good."

"Oh! It's easy enough to rant against our system of religion but all your revolutionary ideas will never shatter our faith."

"Blind faith," interjected Adoni with authority, "in which your church, with its creeds and dogmas has held the people in a nightmare of fear and superstition for ages and ages. What do your parishioners know of the progress the world is making with the searchlight of reason penetrating into the great unknown?"

"My dear good friend," defended the priest with dignity. "Learn to be more wise; you must not allow your people to rise to a plane of knowledge with yourself; let them look to you for what they wish to know, then——"

"If they come and ask their father; does he give them the truth?"

With a searching look of suspicion Adoni waited the priest's answer, who with downcast

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"The state would have full authority to enforce this requirement but should not have the right to enforce the delicate and vital relation of wedlock upon antagonistic natures. Then you will not lend your influence to urge this marriage?"

"Never, if you choose to act in accordance with my suggestion, you may count on my hearty co-operation."

The priest added: "It isn't likely that your brother-in-law, if he did marry Lillian, would become a convert to the Catholic faith and might refuse to have the child baptized."

"I dare say that your church would gain nothing by forcing the marriage."

"But the plan you propose must be made legally binding," replied Father Gebhard cautiously. "Suppose, that together we see the young man?"

"Very well. I leave the city at five but if we can locate our man there will be ample time to arrange all details. With the aid of the telephone Adoni succeeded in making an appointment with Gerald at his office.

At the appointed hour the two men presented themselves. The young man arose and came forward. At the sight of the priest, Gerald's countenance betrayed his apprehension.

Gerald Raymond was a man not over twenty-five, although his haggard expression and blase manner gave the appearance of one much older. A keen observer would at once have detected a certain recklessness about him; his features bore a strong likeness to those of his sister. His

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apparel was one which betrayed an almost effeminate weakness for personal adornment.

The room was elaborate in its furnishings, and reeked with the odor of cigarette smoke.

After the formality of introducing Father Gebhard, Adoni requested a moment's private conversation with Gerald and the two men at once repaired to an inner room. Without wasting time on preliminaries, Adoni began: "You know, Gerald, that I am not in the habit of interfering in your affairs, unless circumstances make it necessary. The present instance warrants such interference. As your guardian and trustee of your estate, I have come to see that you make provision for the support of your child."

"My child? What in hell are you driving at?"

"You know very well what I am referring to. It is quite useless for you to attempt a denial of your and Lillian's child," declared Adoni firmly.

"But," exclaimed Gerald with simulated amazement, his face red with guilty consciousness, "How in the devil can you force me to put up for this brat? How can you prove that I am the father of it?"

"There are plenty of things against you that I can prove. Your past misconduct has placed you absolutely in my power, which you know would never be used unjustly against you, but which I shall employ, if it becomes necessary to secure justice to your own flesh and blood.

Father Gebhard and myself are here to demand that you make provision for the child's main-

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tenance. If you agree to this, the question of marrying Lillian will be left entirely to your sense of honor."

"Does Frances know about this?"

"May I ask where you got your information?" he asked abruptly.

Without further parley Adoni opened the door, assuring Father Gebhard that they were ready, nodding to Gerald, who followed reluctantly. Silently the three men hastened to the attorney's office, where all legal proceedings finished a painful ordeal.

**"Our greatest glory consists not in never falling, but
in rising every time we fall."**

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CHAPTER VI

Truth Ralston Vallero lay restless upon her bed. Her body at last had rebelled against the overstrained nervous tension to which it had been subjected and nature demanded redress for the violation of her laws.

Mrs. Ralston, thoroughly alarmed at her daughter's condition of mind, summoned Dr. Graham, the old family physician, taking him wisely into her confidence, relating the unusual and tragic incidents connected with Truth's illness.

The doctor had known her from birth, had officiated at that event; knew also the nature of Clarence Vallero, and his keen professional intuition was not long in arriving at a correct diagnosis of the case.

After testing her pulse he sat for some time in thoughtful meditation, then turned to Mrs. Ralston and addressed her with compassionate assurance.

"Truth is not physically ill, although she may become so if her mind is not kept perfectly at ease, free from the destructive influence of her husband, who she must not see for a few days at least. Allow no visitors whatever; nothing must annoy her; after that we will be guided by the inclination of our patient."

Truth turned her eyes with an appealing look

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of gratitude upon the doctor, as he smoothed her brow with fatherly tenderness. He smiled reassuringly and with a warm hand clasp departed, followed by Mrs. Ralston.

Truth experienced a great relief at the doctor's instructions; she was to be left alone, something she desired most of all. Exhausted in body and mind—she did not even care to think—she murmured with feeble listlessness to the nurse seated beside the bed:

"Will you kindly leave me alone for a while? I believe I shall be able to sleep now; I—I feel very, very tired." The nurse nodded pleasantly and left the room.

Alone in the cool shadows of her own room, withdrawn from the world within the silence of her own soul, she lay quiet and peaceful and was soon lost in a dreamless sleep. The nurse re-entered, noiselessly smoothed the ruffled bedclothes, lowered the shades, then sought Mrs. Ralston, saying: "Madam, your daughter is sleeping soundly, the doctor assures us that if her slumber is not disturbed all danger of a serious illness will be averted."

"Very well, nurse, I shall see to it that everything is kept perfectly quiet."

After leaving the orders with the servants, Mrs. Ralston entered the library, sat down at her desk, took pen and ink and formulated a diplomatic message to Vallero, which read as follows:

"Clarence, Truth is seriously ill; no one is permitted in the sick room except the nurse. The telephone is silenced and the house kept in

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quietness. Needless to tell you how much I regret this unfortunate affair. Truth's illness will account for what might otherwise occasion unfavorable comment. I trust to your discretion, in refraining from anything that might arouse suspicion of the curious. To avoid gossip it may be well for you to call at the house. If convenient, come tomorrow afternoon."

This she dispatched with a messenger, who returned within a short time with a brief reply: "Expect me tomorrow at three. C. V."

The following morning Truth awakened from a trance-like sleep; the clouds from her mental horizon had vanished. She could think clearly and her past life, like a panorama of shifting scenes, fledged vividly across her vision. With horror she looked upon her wedding day. A bride, misled to the altar of man-made laws, bound to one she did not love; the escape from his lustful passion; the flight from his mansion into the stormy night; her refuge and appeal to her mother; the tragic conflict between two warring wills; then at last the voice of Adoni thrilling into action her ebbing will, flooding with an intruding force her whole being, breaking the clutches around her heart, with which Clarence Vallero held her spell-bound during the service.

Truth's thoughts ran in a groove of mystery. What was this strange power these two men possessed and employed with such opposite effects? One filling her heart with magic love, the other with ghastly fear. How masterfully Adoni had commanded her soul's release from the bonds in

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which Clarence Vallero held it. Truth realized her freedom with a heart full of gratitude for Adoni Bourdaloue. How and what could she do to ever repay him for saving her life from destruction?

Suddenly she recalled those deep engraved words: 'Keep your face resolutely to the sun,' said he. "I am happy to help you as sometime I want you to help me." These simple words filled her heart with holy aspiration and she felt a thrill of life-giving energy pulsate through every fibre of her being. His wish revived her parching soul out of a hopeless existence and awakened it to a new life which had heretofore been so useless.

At first her blindness made her dependent when she had regained her sight; her mother had persisted in the habit of thinking for her and her influence was partly due to her hasty marriage with Vallero. A thrill of pain seized her at the thought of what he would do if she left him; somehow she no longer feared him. A slight tap on the door broke her soliloquy and a dear, familiar voice called softly:

"Truth, are you awake? It is I, Faith, who must come to you for just a minute—dare I?"

"Yes, darling, come, I have longed so much to see you."

Faith hastily groped her way to the bedside, where two loving arms embraced her passionately.

"You poor, dear girl," cried Faith bitterly. "How you must have suffered." She felt of Truth's tear-stained face, then sobbed as though her heart would break.

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"How did you know Faith, that I was at home?"

"I just felt dear, that something was wrong, for last night I had a dream in which I saw your face. You know, sweetheart, that I could never imagine what a face looked like before, and as I gazed at it in speechless bewilderment, your voice called my name, and asked me to help you find the way home—to mother. I took your trembling hand, and led you through a stormy night, I knew not where,—for everything seemed so wonderfully strange, that terribly frightened, I awakened. When I told your mother the experience of my dream, or vision, she related briefly, all that had happened. I know now, what you wished to have me realize on the morning of your wedding,—that you did not love Clarence, as a wife should love a husband. I was blind both ways, and could not understand what you meant. Tell me now, dearie, for you know my love and sympathy are all given to you, and you will feel a great relief to unburden your sorrow to me."

Truth wound her arm affectionately around her little friend, and related in details her sad story.

Faith listened intently, then replied with confidence: "'At the portals of every pure woman's soul stands a guardian angel.' How wonderfully you have been guided and protected, and I know that God will lead you from your sorrow, to that plane of life where you belong." I guess my time is up. I promised your mother and the nurse to remain with you a few moments. My visit has not harmed you, has it Truth?"

"Indeed not, dear one; I feel so much better

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"Clarence," protested Mrs. Ralston, "it was what I saw with my own eyes that convinced me of Truth's statement. When she came home last night she vowed never to return to you. Yet, when you spoke a few persuasive words to her she was ready to come into your outstretched arms. I'm not blind, Clarence. Her sudden change of attitude is unnatural—not at all like Truth. Then her terrible fear of you when she came to herself—how do you account for that?"

"That explanation may satisfy you but I cannot accept it. All I can say is this: If Truth cannot be reconciled I shall not use any undue influence to persuade her; she must decide for herself."

"You will gain nothing by your unmanly taunts, Clarence. I'm sure both Truth and myself are anxious to avoid scandal and will act with the utmost discretion. But because I was unwise in my judgment once is no reason for repeating my mistake."

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"The price you offer, Clarence, is too great; we have already suffered the penalty. All I can promise now is to offer no opposition to an interview between you and Truth and will be glad, indeed, if she will consent to see you as soon as possible."

• • • •

"Good morning, nurse; I must have slept ever so long; I feel so rested and refreshed. What time is it?"

"Yes, I'm so much better." She breathed in the sunlit air with invigorating new life and strength. "I feel well enough to get up and eat my breakfast immediately."

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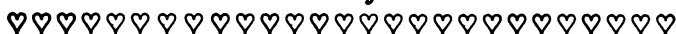
Truth laughed heartily. "May I get up and dress today; I feel this very minute able to do so?"

Mrs. Raiston met him in the hall, where they remained in serious conversation for nearly an hour. When he arose to go he said in a kind, fatherly way:

With suppressed emotion Mrs. Ralston agreed with him saying, "I trust her also."

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the desire to take part in life's battle, to conquer its difficulties with a brave heart.

Vallero continued calling at the house daily and sending the rarest flowers with which her room was filled, presenting a garden picture in which Truth became master over her former life—realizing at last that she must be true to herself and become an "individuality" which was now demanding its right.

Mrs. Ralston came in frequently when Truth was able to sit up, chatting pleasantly on impersonal subjects, avoiding all reference to Vallero.

"I see by the morning paper," said Mrs. Ralston indifferently, "that the Rev. Bourdalone was out of the city; had gone to his mother's who was very ill; also that his wife is about to sail for Paris. She ought to have shown better judgment," commented Mrs. Ralston, "and waited until Adoni's mother had recovered. But it looks just like her; Frances Bourdalone will never let sickness or anything interfere with her enjoyment."

"But, mother, perhaps she went before they received word of Mrs. Bourdalone's illness."

"No, my child, for the paper stated that Adoni left Tuesday evening and Thursday night the Murrys gave a dinner in her honor. There is a silly rumor that a French count who was her constant companion all last winter will sail for Paris on the same liner."

Truth's heart beat quickly and her face flushed with resentment against Frances as she exclaimed:

"I know she is very daring, but I hardly

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"She seems to delight in outraging it. Some day she will overstep the boundary and society will cast her out forever." Perceiving the nervous strain that fell upon Truth, Mrs. Ralston changed the subject at once to one more agreeable, keeping up an incessant chatter on trifling things until she left the room.

When her mother had gone, Truth arose and sat by the window, meditating upon what she had heard. The sudden appearance of Vallero, changed her thoughts. Hastily she saw him coming up the walk and enter the house. Truth waited and watched in breathless expectancy, but he did not intrude his presence upon her. In a few minutes she heard him leave the house and breathed a sigh of relief as she watched him turn the corner and out of her sight.

She realized now, more than ever, that she must face him and take the initiative stand. She could not bear the thought of his visits to the house, as if he still held a claim upon her and she determined to put an end to it at once.

The next morning when the nurse had finished her usual routine of work, Truth, in her sweet mannered way, looked at her smilingly, saying:

"It really is absurd to have you wait upon me any longer; I am perfectly able to attend to my own wants and I am going to give you a whole day of recreation, so you will not have to put in your appearance until bedtime. You may go now," commanded Truth kindly, "and tell mother to come to my room as soon as convenient for her;

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Truth hastened with her toilet and was seated comfortably in a reclining chair when her mother entered.

"Mother, I can assure you, that I feel perfectly well again, ready to take an active part in life once more. I am actually a disgrace to a sick-room and want you to dismiss the nurse and doctor tomorrow—and mother, there is no need of postponing this painful subject between Clarence and myself. I saw him when he called yesterday. What did he want and what did he say? Mother, please be perfectly frank and honest with me as I intend to be with you and Clarence. What attitude does he hold toward me?"

“Clarence is very anxious to have you return with him to his home. He protests that he loves you dearly and will be the kindest of husbands.”

“But Clarence denies any cruelty or controlling you hypnotically, and declares the electric shock caused your dazed condition.”

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"Do you feel strong enough to see Clarence? He has requested an interview as soon as you are equal to the task."

"Then why not return to him?" interposed Mrs. Ralston quickly. "His social position ought to be taken into consideration. In these days, my daughter, money can contribute much toward happiness."

"My dear child, have you fully considered the consequences? However we may try to suppress it—your separation is bound to create a scandal. Think of the unpleasant notoriety it will involve in our circle. The papers will be full of sensational things. I can already hear the newsboys shouting it on the streets; it will be a terrible ordeal."

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to sway us in following the dictates of our heart and soul desires? If I were to sacrifice all my hopes and ideals and sell my body as a wife to Clarence Vallero, the world of conventionality would no doubt respect, what every true woman would despise in herself."

Mrs. Ralston gazed at Truth with amazement as she continued:

"Mother, let me confess frankly that I am heartily tired and ashamed of this hypocritical life and refuse to take part in the farce modern society is playing daily. I want something more real, mother, more satisfying; something to do and achieve." Her voice trembled in her pleading eloquence. For a moment she hesitated and with outraged dignity gazed at her mother.

"What in the world has come over you, my child; I never heard you talk this way before? You have been lying here, destroying all our plans for the future, and our travels."

"I am tired of travelling," interposed Truth nervously. "Forgive me mother, dear, if I seem ungrateful for all the advantages I heartily appreciated once upon a time, but that time has gone by. What I want now is work, useful work, something worth while, to somewhat make amends for the useless creature I have been."

Mrs. Ralston heard the ring of determination in her daughter's voice with a feeling of dismay. Was Truth developing her father's obstinate spirit? That could never be changed when once he resolved to do a thing which his heart was set upon.

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"What kind of work could you really do, dear child, that would benefit yourself or any one else; what are you fitted for? I know of nothing." declared Mrs. Ralston with an air of helplessness.

"That is just the question I asked myself, mother, and when the answer came I was painfully shocked. Then I began to think and a craving desire crept into my heart and I prayed as I never had before, and mother, dear, I felt that my first earnest prayer was answered—for my soul was inspired with beautiful thoughts—and I thanked God for my affliction which made a glorious work possible for me to accomplish. I can be of great service to the blind, having lived many years with those sightless ones. I understand and sympathize with their yearnings, which nothing but the sight of our beautiful world can satisfy. But the motive which is prompting me to do God's work will cast rays of sunshine into the world of darkness and lonesome lives of my unfortunate brothers and sisters."

The sweet and solemn gladness that vibrated in Truth's voice deeply affected Mrs. Ralston, although she did not share this noble enthusiasm.

"Tell me, my child, what in the world it is that you desire to do for them?"

"Enter in the school for the blind where I can be of incalculable service to these sightless ones."

"Mercy," exclaimed Mrs. Ralston, "you do not seriously mean to undertake such dismal work? Why it would be just dreadful, child, to be constantly in such depressing atmosphere."

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Truth shook her head. "There are only a few who can give their heart's service, which, because of my past affliction, I can render with sympathy."

"My work must be a labor of love that can not confine itself to one personality; it reaches out to all I am able to assist in my simple way. Let us reason mother, and then adopt the best plan for the future. When this scandal, as you term it, comes to light, you will insist on going somewhere to evade the gossip of society. I would refuse to accompany you, and could not remain in this big house alone. Now, understand me well, mother—when Faith goes back to school—I shall go with her. Then, how grand it would be for you, dear mother, to take a little cottage near by, where I could spend my spare time with you. There, there! Now don't say it is impossible! Just think it over seriously, and I know you will agree with my suggestion."

Mrs. Ralston complied with astonishment. Could this, indeed, be her timid little girl, asserting her womanhood in this unaccountable way?

A Vision of Truth



CHAPTER VII

Swiftly the train rushed through the golden, crimson radiance of the departing day. Field and hill, river and woodland, were transfigured by the transcendent glow of the setting sun. From the window of the car, Adoni looked upon the fleeting panorama with keen appreciation of its magical charm. As the train sped onward, the golden flood gradually deepened into a sea of purple gloom and the elfin shadows of the twilight merged imperceptibly into the star-strewn splendor of the night.

Oblivious to all the surrounding hum of voices and rumbling of the wheels, Adoni reviewed the portentous and fateful past. This had been an eventful day. He could scarcely realize that the past forty-eight hours had changed the entire course of his life.

The changes had begun with the wedding day of Truth and Vallero which had proved his own weakness. Then followed the demand to enforce his new-formed resolve into immediate action, by advising Lillian not to marry Gerald. Then came the storm and electric shock which released Truth from the thrall of evil, and his summons to the Ralston home, followed by his trial of strength with Vallero which had resulted in Truth's deliverance.

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The next twenty-four hours had been fraught with no less importance. The last interview with Frances; the letter from his sister; Father Gebhard's visit and the adjustment of financial affairs in the interests of Lillian, through his own mediation.

Verily, he had burned the bridges behind him. He would no longer tread the old paths. He had already set the wheels in motion that would propel him along new and untried roads, rugged and stone-strewn, which only the fearless can traverse. The discipline he had just undergone would surely fit him for trials worth while.

The train rumbled on into the night. In another hour he would be at his destination. He reached into his pocket for his sister's letter and re-read it carefully. "Poor little Martha," sighed Adoni. "This will be a trying ordeal for one so young." Yet the letter breathed no terror at the approach of the dread intruder. Only the natural sorrow of separation from a dear mother, desiring to join her beloved husband, who, twenty years before, had been suddenly taken from her by drowning, while sailing with a party of friends on the lake near his home.

His mother had never entirely recovered from the shock which seemed to wrench her heart asunder, longing to follow her beloved into that beautiful Beyond. Remaining on this earth plane only because duty demanded her to, and guide their little boy and girl safely through life. To Adoni, his mother was an inspiration. Their home life previous to their great bereave-

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ment had been ideal. How beautiful had been the devotion between his father and mother! Mentally and spiritually their lives grew upward together, trusting each other implicitly and living for the highest soul development, which sustained his mother under the weight of care and responsibility which was thrust upon her. Early she began to take her boy into her confidence, consulting and advising with him; awakening and fostering within him a deep, chivalrous regard for womanhood. She had ever mingled a delightful comradeship with a tender, maternal solicitude, strengthening always the spiritual bond between them.

For him, her only son, no sacrifice was too great—nor effort spared—nor duty shirked to gratify his ambition and heart's desire to become of service to mankind. Such was Adoni's retrospection as he felt himself drawing near to the old home.

Suddenly the train stopped. He had arrived at his native village. Hastily alighting at the familiar old station, he made his way quickly through the narrow village street and into the open country beyond.

There was no moon, but the solemn canopy of heaven gleamed with the soft luminance from the infinitude of starry space. Clover scented fields, dew laden and fragrant, greeted his nostrils. A choir of tiny night voices chanted their praises in unison from nature's own hymnal. Except for these a quietude brooded over the land and a peaceful calm prevailed about him.

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Adoni walked swiftly along the winding road, enthralled by the music of the night, he could scarcely comprehend, why his mother should wish to leave so beautiful a world? Then came to his mind these dear familiar words: "Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also."

Adoni's home stood within the dense shadows of encircling maples. As he approached the house, he saw it was in darkness, save for a dim light in his mother's room. Quietly he mounted the stair, and wondered if they were all asleep?

He disliked the thought of disturbing them, and had almost resolved to spend the night on the comfortably furnished veranda, when another light illuminated the living room, and a voice called timidly from the window—"Who is there—?"

"'Tis I, Martha—Adoni—!"

In another instant the door opened, and Martha rushed into the arms of her brother, sobbing brokenly! "Oh, Don, Don, I'm afraid mother's gone! I'm afraid you're too late, Don! Come, come, brother, perhaps you can wake her—? She went without a word, without one parting caress! She said—she wanted to see you before—before—"

Martha choked—! "Oh, Don—you will try and bring her back—won't you—?"

"Calm yourself, Martha, be my brave little sister and we will see if mother will realize that I have come home."

As Adoni entered his mother's chamber, the doctor arose from the bedside, and came to meet him with extended hands.

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"I believe it is all over." Shaking his white head sorrowfully, he whispered: "At first I thought she had fallen into one of those fainting spells she had been subject to but I have employed all the usual tests without avail. I have exhausted my skill and there is no indication of life."

Adoni thanked him briefly, and at once asked to be left alone with Martha and his mother. The doctor withdrew quietly, closing the door softly behind him.

With bowed head Adoni stood beside his mother's bed and looked silently upon her white features. Was it the austere majesty of death that confronted him? The stillness of that rigid form proclaimed death's dominion. Upon the settled calm of these waxen features its seal was set.

Adoni knew that transition is not annihilation. His mother was a living soul in or out of the body, and if the life cord had not yet been severed from the mortal habitation, the power of love might not fail him to raise the dead and restore life enough to have his mother speak once more.

"Martha, dear, I want you to leave me alone with mother. I will call you when she has returned—if she may return."

Martha obeyed quietly and Adoni was left alone—with the one called dead.

Silently he held her cold, lifeless hand in his strong life-giving clasp. He placed his other hand upon her forehead and knelt with closed eyes in communion with God.

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A solemn, death-like stillness prevailed. Oblivious to all external surroundings the passing of time was not heeded.

Just once the sacred name of "mother" was breathed upon the listening air with startling distinctness!

"Mother, can you hear me? Are you coming?" Moments passed! Then a slight tremor became visible upon the fragile form. A delicate flush crept over the pallid features—the eyelids began to flutter—then unclosed! With an unfathomable light shining from them, they looked consciously into those bending over her.

Her lips shaped his name, but—no sound issued from them—.

Adoni leaned closer, then kissed her tenderly! "Dear little mother," he murmured with trembling voice. "I knew you would come back."

"There, there, do not try to speak, mother—rest for a moment, while I call Martha."

Stepping to the door—Adoni beckoned his sister! With breathless agitation, she hurried to the bedside! At the sight of her mother's open eyes, an involuntary cry of joyful surprise fell from her lips, and brought the doctor to the door.

He stopped short! Awe-struck and speechless he stared upon the "dead"—resurrected—to life!

Adoni was bending over his mother, holding her hands in his quiet, masterful way, pouring all the magnetic power of heart and soul into her frail body, to revive and strengthen her weak body—the effect was magical!

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Her lips began to move, forming a few faint words. Moments again elapsed in which she appeared to make a supreme effort, then she spoke with a calm and distinct voice:

"My son," she continued.—"You have evolved into the great illumination—have battled and overcome—ready to undertake God's work—of spreading the light! Remember your name—it was given to you for a purpose! 'Adoni, the Spirit of Light.' Let it ever shine in the dark places. Let your work of love be the accomplishment of that purpose, which will place you in the current of mighty forces—inspiring you to become a master——."

“My son, a holy mission has been assigned to you—you have become a chosen instrument—. Profound knowledge shall be imparted to you, by one of the seers of old.—An adept—whom I have never seen in the flesh—but—with whom I have held spiritual converse—awaits you! He is old in years and experience, though young in appearance. His home lies in a remote region of the

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Himalaya mountains, where in the silence, free from distracting influences, you will be taught the 'Science of Life' and so-called Death. The letter which Martha will give you, contains complete instructions how to find him. Are you ready, my son—and willing to obey this call?"

Her eyes lovingly sought his with a look of searching inquiry?

"I am more than ready, mother," said Adoni with resolute firmness!

"I am conscious of my imperfections, and am eager to learn of the wise men, all that my mind is able to comprehend, and I thank God for the rare opportunity that you, dear mother, are now giving me.

A smile, radiant and beautiful, lighted the mother's countenance.

"Spoken like my own dear boy, granting as ever, your mother's desire of the heart."

Turning then to Martha, she spoke most tenderly: "Darling little girl, you will be brave, I know. Your Aunt Martha will come to make her home with you—then—when your brother returns—he will be both father and mother to his little sister."

She reached out her hand—Adoni clasped it!

Placing his arm protectingly about his sister he assured his mother, with tremulous voice, that he would regard this duty as the most sacred obligation of his life.

With a happy smile the mother closed her eyes. Brother and sister both watched with abated breath, wondering if she would speak once more?

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After moments of deathlike stillness,—the heavy eyelids unclosed,—she looked upward and smiled! “Your father—!” she whispered softly—“is waiting for me—.” Her voice grew fainter,—she stopped breathing!

The two watchers bent over her to catch her feeble words, and glanced at each other with questioning eyes—? Adoni broke the solemn silence.

“Mother dear” his voice trembled!—“Do you wish to go— is there anything more you would like to say to us—?”

How solemn and peaceful this death-bed scene! No fear engraved upon the mother’s face; simply a look of anticipated joy, while awaiting that wondrous transition from this earth plane, into that perfect life beyond!

Adoni and Martha seemed to sense, that the life cord was still unbroken, and nearly suspended their own breathing, as almost imperceptible whispers again fell upon their straining ears!

“I will guide and,—watch over you,—my love will protect you—always—. Adoni—! Martha—! Your father is taking me away—good-bye!”

Silently,—and tearless, brother and sister reached for her hand, and pressed the last kiss upon her brow! “Until we meet again mother—farewell!”

The radiance of a heavenly light, seemed to form a halo around the mother’s head,—a last flutter of the eyelids,—and over her features came a look of perfect tranquillity and final rest.

“What a grand release,” exclaimed the old doctor, who had risen and moved close to where the brother and sister were standing hovering

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Upon returning home from the churchyard, Adoni read the letter which his mother had referred to. It contained explicit directions for reaching the remote abode of the Adept. He read the earnest request of his mother, which was almost a command, and which he had promised on her death-bed, to obey. Despite his lack of enthusiasm he had resolved to follow the dictations of her soul, and go to the land of mysteries; there within the majestic silence of the mountains he would master the wisdom of forgotten ages.

The next morning Adoni arose at the dawn of day, strolling through the near-by woodlands, and the dear old garden where he had spent his boyhood years. He had left his home fifteen years before, to enter the great "school of life" where ever since he had battled with many serious problems, many times stumbling and falling in apparent defeat.

But as his vision grew clearer, he would again arise with courage and greater strength, realizing that in the eternal progress of all things he was permitted to touch the stepping stones to the realm of higher things.

Thus, walking along in deepest meditation, Adoni heard the voice of Martha calling him to breakfast.

After they had finished an enjoyable meal, brother and sister embraced each other in a loving farewell, Adoni promising to return from the mystic regions the following year. With another kiss upon Martha's quivering lips, and a warm hand clasp from the dear old aunt, Adoni departed.

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"Is Mrs. Bourdaloue at home?" inquired Adoni.

"Thank you; that is all I wish to know. You can serve my lunch in the breakfast room."

Suddenly he was surprised to find a sensational account of the "Electric shock the beautiful bride of Clarence Vallero received in the storm," which the attending physician, Dr. Graham, feared would result in cerebral fever, but the critical stage had been safely passed, and the patient's condition no longer serious, etc.

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doctor assured him that while he would be glad to grant his request, he could not make an exception in his favor, having forbidden all except the nurse to enter the sick room. Adoni thanked him kindly, saying that he would take the liberty to call again the following day.

With these thoughts he consoled himself and with an effort proceeded with his work but found it difficult to concentrate his mind upon his correspondence. He finally brushed the letters aside, thinking that if he could not see Truth, he might at least give her an absent treatment.

In the depths of silence he sat, knowing not how long, sending on magnetic thought waves: *God's healing power of love.*

The hour was late when Adoni retired. He fell asleep, with his last prayer for Truth.

“Make not thyself the judge of any man.”

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CHAPTER VIII

The Rev. Adoni Bourdaloue rang the door bell at St. Paul's rectory, for the greatly desired interview with his Bishop, who was fortunately at home and not engaged. The Bishop's greeting was courteously affable and expressive of paternal solicitude. He was an elderly man, tall and spare, with dignified and scholarly aspect. His exalted position and material interests served to increase his self-complacency and his satisfaction with the 'God of things as they are.' He was consistently opposed to innovations and progressive ideas, and had it not been for Adoni's renown as a healer, which imparted something of the miraculous atmosphere of the early Christian church to his diocese, he would have required Adoni's resignation long ere this. Those wonderful cures, however, were a spiritual asset not to be ignored. Hence, his tolerant indulgence toward, what he termed Adoni's ultra-progressive-ness, and his expedient policy of seeking through persuasive measures to bring this refractory disciple again into line.

On this occasion Adoni took the initiative, and without beating about the bush, came directly to the point.

"I scarcely know, Bishop, whether you will be

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The Bishop gazed at Adoni with complete surprise.

"I agree with you, Bishop, and assure you that I am acting only after calm and careful deliberation. For three years I have considered this matter, and I feel confident that further delay would be a fruitless waste of time, dishonesty to the church—and disloyalty to myself."

“That is not sound Protestant doctrine, Bishop. All protestantism advocates liberty of conscience in deciding religious questions, and protests against ecclesiastical interference with the right to worship and follow the dictates of one’s soul.”

"There comes a time," replied Adoni, "when prudence ceases to be a virtue. I can assure you,

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Bishop, that on many previous occasions, I sought counsel of my colleagues and spiritual advisers, but none of them, yourself included, have succeeded in harmonizing my conviction with the life and duties of an Angelican minister."

"In what way, my son, do your ideas conflict with our holy teachings?"

Adoni answered slowly:

"You will pardon me for not entering specifically into the various doctrines of faith which I do not possess. However, I honestly assert that the spirit of modern Christianity lacks sincerity; it is committed to the policy of commercialism, where under the hypocritical mantle of religion, man does not worship God, but Mammon."

A challenging expression flitted across the Bishop's features. "You forget, my son, that in our present times, the church could accomplish nothing without money. To ignore its material blessings in this commercial age would be suicidal, indeed. How else could the church spread the gospel or engage in its manifold charitable enterprises?"

"If the church had fulfilled its holy mission; had contended for justice between man and man, instead of permitting the rich and powerful to rob the poor at every turn, there would be no necessity for so much debasing alms-giving. It is useless to pretend that it is solely for charitable purposes that the church is so much concerned. The enormous expenses of our magnificent temples of worship, where the congre-

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gation, clad in costly raiment, chants to a ten-thousand dollar organ on Sunday, are preposterous. On the morrow these same devotees practice ways and means of getting money, raising often most cruelly the price of actual necessities, thus bringing about the very conditions which make charity necessary."

"But the church does not advocate such dishonest practices, and admonishes its children against the sin of avarice and covetousness."

"Well content, merely to 'admonish.' It is easier to say what ought to be done, than what shall be done. Easy to say, 'Lord, Lord,' and do the works of Mammon. Does not the living God despise such half-hearted worship? What to Him is your lip service if you neglect the work of establishing his kingdom on earth—The 'Kingdom of righteousness?'"

"Without money, how can we establish it?" asked the Bishop.

"By ceasing to make friends with Mammon—and the spirit of greed that rules the world. What did Jesus mean when he said: 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon' and 'Lay not up for yourself treasures on earth?' Did he not identify himself with earth's lowly and down-trodden? Was he not filled with sorrow and indignation at the bigotry and blind Mammon worship of Jewish piety? Like the man of Nazareth, I can not reconcile these things. Where God rules, there rules the energy against injustice; there wealth ceases to sun itself in the miseries of the poor. Shall not the same God that rules the inmost

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hearts of men also change the outward aspect of their lives? And if the spirit of Christ dwells in the hearts of Christians, shall the church continue in iniquity? What kind of love is it, that will only bind up wounds, but never prevent them? What kind of faith which holds out the hope of future reward for present injustice, rather than risk the displeasure of its wealthy patrons by word and deed, never taking a decided stand to make things right, here and now?"

The Bishop sat in speechless perplexity as Adoni ceased abruptly to speak. It was impossible not to be impressed by the forceful argument and fiery zeal that burned in the younger man's eyes with convincing evidence, which in spite of himself, the Bishop could not deny, and with awe was moved to a profound respect for the fearless and uncompromising young zealot.

Long and earnestly he gazed at him—then his gentle, persuasive voice broke the silence.

"My son, if you see such crying evils in the church, and I am sorry to admit there are many that need correction, why go outside of the fold? The church needs a Savanarola to cleanse and purify her mental horizon from age to age. With tact and judgment, you should in your zeal, as a reformer, be able to accomplish much within our own community."

Adoni shook his head. "No, Bishop, the church is too hopelessly enmeshed in the net of its own worldly interests to be extricated. It will take more than mending and preaching the

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worn-out creeds, to successfully combat present-day evils. The salvation of the world requires a gospel of deeds. Deeds, mighty and radical, to cope with the giant idol which rears its powerful head of gold in menace over our civilization. Think not that the vast army of men and women, pledged to the service of Mammon, will be turned from their worship by the soft breath of pious persuasion. To win this battle the church would have to array itself actively and uncompromisingly against this false God; would have to stand honestly for justice between men; for righteous conditions and equitable adjustment in all relations of life. This the church cannot consistently do until it re-interprets the Bible, revises its creed, abolishes its dogmas and ceases to employ the superstitions of an ignorant past to bully the progressive spirit of the age. The church will not assume this militant attitude. The closing of the nineteenth century witnessed the culmination of formalism, and the spiritual re-action is now creating a hunger of the human heart which nothing but truth, naked and uninvolved, will satisfy. The church has failed in its mission, and a Higher Authority has conferred holy orders upon me. We must, therefore, part company for I have a distinct and sacred call I dare no longer ignore; a work which must not be harrassed and impeded by the prejudice of the church. It is impossible for me to longer subscribe my work to a creed which my conscience repudiates."

There was an unmistakable finality in his

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With secret admiration the Bishop regarded him, realizing the futility of attempting to shake the inflexible purpose of this brave and honest soul. Involuntarily he reached out his hand, and grasped that of Adoni.

Adoni gazed at the Bishop—and through sudden tears—recognized in the fervent hand-clasp—his friend. Silently he went out from his presence.

The aristocratic parish of St. Paul would discontinue its services until fall. In consequence the seating capacity of the church was taxed to its utmost with exquisitely gowned women and faultlessly attired men. The continuous swish of silken garments, scented with perfume; the subdued murmur of polite conversation; women casting covert glances at each other; men discreetly admiring them—all together served to impart an air of luxurious elegance, and which created a worldly atmosphere in the place of worship.

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Adoni Bourdaloue stood before the altar in earnest prayer.

As the choir boys chanted in softest unison, "Oh, Light Eternal," he slowly ascended the pulpit. The rainbow-tinted lights from the windows reflected upon the whiteness of his face a shining halo, almost suggesting the presence of an inspired prophet. Those who sensed the radiance of his soul, were thrilled with chastened admiration, as he glanced over the congregation with calm composure.

Through the silent hush of expectancy a voice, low but of penetrating clearness, rang out like a silver bell, completely filling the great auditorium.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."

To his listeners this text was familiar, but to some at this hour, this message reflected a disconcerting effect written upon each face as though suddenly awakened into consciousness of having hitherto ignored the divine injunction:

"The Kingdom of God."

"Where is it! We look and search everywhere in this material world and find it not. Unprotected by knowledge, we rush blindly in pursuit of love and happiness. Followed by the shadows of life's sorrow, we drift into a wilderness—stumble—and fall—crushed with our disappointments we are unable to rise and find that happiness has again eluded us.

"In old Jerusalem there was One who told us where to find the 'Kingdom of God.' Multitudes failed to grasp His meaning, and sought to

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establish a Jewish kingdom over which to make Him earthly king. He was crowned with thorns and crucified. His apostles gave their lives to establish a kingdom of heaven upon earth. But soon an army of priests and intercessors aggregated to themselves all power and dominion over this holy realm, making friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, and the church became an institution. Instead of cultivating the garden in 'God's Kingdom,' to bear holy fruit in the hearts of men, it transformed the temples into charnel houses of dead hopes which falsely impressed their devotees that heaven lies beyond the vale of tears."

"We are standing now in the dawn of a great 'Spiritual Awakening,' where through the 'Gateway of Thought,' many souls have become illumined, and through the 'Spirit of Love' have created a 'Heaven upon Earth.'

" 'Seek and ye shall find.' It was your patron saint who said, 'Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good.' I have sought and found great truths. A conflict has arisen between my soul's convictions and the teachings of the creeds which I formerly accepted. I can not reject the truths that I have found, I cannot harmonize them with the traditions of the established church, and to preach my convictions under the guise of the angelic faith would, through deceitful practice, unfit me to be the instrument to reveal the Kingdom of God within the hearts of men. I would rather undergo the condemnation of the church; lose the regard

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of my ecclesiastical superiors; endure the censure of a thoughtless world, than to be a hypocrite in the sight of God."

"If you wish to find the Kingdom of God, look no more toward glittering crosses on cathedral domes, but lift the cross of the down-trodden, struggling with poverty. Look upon the careworn faces of mothers and see their misery when they hear the cry of their half-starved little ones; the underpaid daughters, bribed, bought and sold as white slaves to man's unholy desire; the sons of intemperance; the wayward girls of the slums. Open the portals of your souls to all sin-stricken humanity, so that they may see in you the spirit of Christ leading them into the 'Temple of the Living God,' where bruised and bleeding hearts will find upon the altars your offering of wealth and holy deeds for the brotherhood of man.

"Also find the love Christ revealed, that uplifts man into the secret places of the most High, there to learn that the science of life is holy living, and that the science of religion is service to others. Therefore, let no man that hath eyes and sees not; hath ears and hears not, call himself a Christian, who permits suffering he could alleviate.

"In the religious world there has come a great psychological awakening. Through the false conception of God's will, the church has not dealt intelligently with the problem of salvation; has given itself entirely to the salvation of soul for a future life, and has failed to teach the

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christian science or do the practical work that Jesus did to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead." For it is not written, "That greater things than these we shall do?" That the kingdom of heaven shall be taken from you and given to a people bringing forth fruits of its kind? The religion of practical Christianity has already been formed outside of the church, demonstrating through spiritual enlightenment the laws of divine healing. Since then the church has felt a desertion from its ranks; has become alarmed and is making a desperate effort to keep in the race for knowledge, realizing it is in danger of destruction.

"The church has fallen far below its high calling, and many illumined minds and loyal hearts are remaining within its walls, not because they agree with its principles and dogmas, but because of a noble purpose to aid in raising it to a standard that would make it an honor to Him whose name it bears. Outstretched arms are extended to those who have broken out of bondage and beckon for their return.

"But what has the church to offer?

"Is it ready to teach the laws of love, health, and success in life? How can it ever hope for the return of those who are receiving these things outside of the church, and through mental discipline awakening to the fact, that we are not sinners, but gods of our own world?

"We do not realize this until we have a spiritual awakening and open the windows of our souls, that the sunlight of God's love may shine

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into and radiate through our being. We may starve in a world of plenty, grow cold and cynical in an atmosphere pulsating with infinite love. The personal man may feel content in the valley of mere things. Not so with the awakened soul transcended above this material world to heights sublime, where we hear a voice say: 'Where I am, there ye may be also.' Still in human form we enter, and find ourselves in heaven upon earth, the significance of life revealed, and we just begin to live.

"Our existence becomes an endless inspiration in a world of spiritual things, where everything is animated with a great divine purpose. Where the eye of the awakened soul is too pure to see anything but what is good; where the mind is too luminous to know anything but truth; where the body becomes the concentrated temple of the spirit and feels nothing but health and purity.

"When once the gateway of thought has been opened to this inner realm, the old earth and the old heaven pass away. From groping in the blindness and uncertainty of previous mental states, the mind becomes illumined with the light of Immortal Intelligence and all the phenomena of nature takes on a different hue and tone—a different meaning. When the observant mind is vivified by the awakening touch of knowledge it is to learn and understand the philosophy of life, the religion of Religions and the science of Sciences.

"The world is becoming conscious of a psychic

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element working through all visible and invisible nature, and the force of its influence is felt in every department of human thought. It has wrought an entire change in the attitude of thoughtful minds concerning the problems of 'Life and Death,' the relation between the two states; at the same time opening up a vast inter-realm, including all the psychological problems and possibilities of the human mind, while still in the human environment. The invisible forces have solved the knotty problems between religion and science, by correcting erroneous impressions born of ignorance concerning a future life, substituting knowledge for theories. Belief is much; Faith is more but Knowledge is all.

"Through the ages, the church with its creeds and dogmas, with its beautiful lessons and inspiring sermons, has taught us there was another world and to prepare for it. But where is this world—this world beyond the grave?

"This most important and tremendous question has never been answered by the messenger of the church. You stand around the open grave of your loved ones and your hearts are torn with anguish. Doubts, fear and anxiety, creep secretly into your hearts, that perhaps you have parted with them forever. Oh, that it were in my power, dear friends, to lift the veil of your mental horizon and present to your spiritual vision those arisen ones, walking the earth unseen—at all times—when you wake and when you sleep; hovering around their loved ones, aiding them in all exalted themes for the

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uplift of humanity. Their exalted influence is felt in every life that accepts its truths.

“To a materialistic and unbelieving age it has demonstrated the existence of spirit and continued life beyond the change called death.

“To those who had hope and faith in a future life through any form of religious belief or philosophical reasoning, it has added knowledge, and to all have been opened the gates that materialism and theology had not even left ajar between the material and spiritual realms.

“It has removed the fear of death by knowledge immortal messengers have brought. It has proven in most wonderful ways the nearness of that so-called undiscovered country, where invisible hands have bridged the chasm and spanned the stream of death by an archway of love; re-kindled the fires upon the altars of inspiration that for ages had been desolate. Ministering angels have attuned anew the voices of mortals to immortal songs. They have ‘rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulcher’ where numberless human hearts thought their loved ones were buried. But now we know they are not dead but live, and if we but listen, can hear their voices whispering sweet messages of love and a religion of joy, of hope, of happiness. The testimony of disembodied human souls is the only authentic source of information upon subjects pertaining to that state of existence beyond the grave. Its authority is Truth. Its creed is the unwritten law of love and wisdom. Its ceremonials are the service of noble lives.

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Its altars the human spirit. Its temples the living souls. The 'well-springs of eternal life' are here, and Truth bids mortals drink from the inexhaustible fountain of Love. The 'bread of life' is here, and all are bidden to partake freely from the all-bounteous storehouse.

"From the rare vintage of the spirit her sacramental wine is distilled in living inspiration. Poets quaff as the enchanted goblet is pressed to their lips and they sing the songs of the spheres.

"Sages gather from its open treasure-house the wisdom of the skies. Seers and prophets, inspired anew, reveal again the immortal themes.

"The whole world touched, awakened, thrilled, arises from the lethargy of materialism and dogmatic assertions; from charnel houses of the senses; from tombs of death and despair; from sepulchres wherein their hopes and faith were well-nigh buried. But now at the dawn of a new day comes a Light which opens the eyes of thirsty and hungry hearts, starving in this world for a satisfying religion, turning away from traditional accretion and burdensome perplexities, eager to progress with the science of life.

"A great battle is raging in the orthodox church, between the old and the new thought. Truths are being preached from the pulpit today that only a few years back no one would have dared to utter.

"The message of those who have the moral courage, tells man he need no longer remain the creature of darkness and ignorance—if he

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Millions that call themselves christians today, are led through life by blind faith. They fear the spectral shadow called—*death!* And when the inevitable transition takes place, know not that—blindfolded they have been ushered into the next world, until they stand before “Life’s Mirror,” “Face to face” with their own soul—presenting to them, their own created *heaven!*—or—*hell!*

“With such remorse they implore us to tell their loved ones still in earth life, the anguish they suffer through—*ignorance!* And plead for us to enlighten every soul with the knowledge that when life’s journey is ended, dear, familiar forms with outstretched arms, will stand at the portals to welcome their coming! How glorious is this knowledge, revealing—*Life—beyond the grave.*”

"Jesus said: 'I go to preach to spirits in prison.' Within the prison walls, I heard a Voice proclaiming: 'Truth shall make you free.' When I beheld the Vision and saw not chains to fetter.

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but wings to uplift us into heaven upon earth, then my soul longed for its freedom! My spirit became rebellious within the bondage of the church! I fought for my liberty—and prayed for strength to break the chains that bound me to human creeds and dogmas.”

“My prayer was answered! Now I rejoice, that—*Truth*—has set me free!”

“Friends, I leave you—to fulfill a Divine command! The voice of my soul calls me to go out into the world and establish ‘A Kingdom of God’ in the hearts of man. Therefore—I must—violate man-made laws, to obey those created by God! Beloved brethren—farewell!”

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A solemn silence reigned.

The eyes of each listener followed the stately form of their pastor descending the pulpit. So intense was the stillness succeeding his farewell words, that the chirping of a tiny bird outside the stained glass window fell sharp and clear upon every ear in that perturbed assemblage.

The shock occasioned by the pastor’s announcement was stupefying for it had come without warning. The powerful message had wrought conflicting emotions in the heart of each man and woman. Amazement, incredulity, indignation and sorrow were expressed upon each face. Whatever they might think of his action, the fact that he was leaving them; that they were losing the leadership of one whose place it would be most difficult to fill, outweighed all else.

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Slowly the large assemblage filed out of the church. Many lingered in the vestibule, eager to say something and to hear more. They crowded around Adoni, beseeching and imploring him to remain just a while longer with them. Men in whose hands the financial management of the church was entrusted, begged to be permitted to double his salary. All their remonstrance and persuasion was in vain. Women who had come to the service, radiant and smiling, appeared to be crushed with sorrow and disappointment. They looked upon his going as a tragic scene in the great drama of life. A few of the more courageous men and women did not seek to dissuade him but commended him for the courage of his convictions, assuring him that through his inspiring words they would be able to seek the Kingdom of God. Not one soul doubted his sincerity but honored and respected him for the radical position he had so strongly taken.

The Bishop was the last to grasp Adoni's hand. The tear-stained eyes betrayed his inward emotion, and with a slight tremor in his voice which became tender and compassionate, he said:

"My son, may the courage of your heart's conviction and your soul's ideals be crowned with the diadem of your holy achievement. Go, my son—let your light shine. The dreamers are the saviours of the world."

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CHAPTER IX

Seated at the breakfast table Mrs. Ralston was deeply interested in the morning paper. Truth was still sipping her coffee and seemed to heartily enjoy their first meal together since the day before her memorable wedding.

"What is the news, mother?"

Mrs. Ralston smiled across the table at her daughter's slightly flushed face and eager inquiry she responded happily.

I'm delighted, my child, that you are beginning to take interest in things of the world again, although I know you will be sorry to see this.

She handed Truth the paper opened at the page given to religious affairs, where appeared the picture of Rev. Adoni Bourdaloue, under which was printed his resignation from St. Paul's church, with extracts from his farewell sermon preached upon the previous morning. As Truth devoured every word with conflicting emotions which she could scarcely conceal, she dropped the paper upon her lap and sat for a few moments absorbed in meditation, while an expression, difficult to define, swept across her pallid face.

Mrs. Ralston was watching Truth's demeanor with curious interest, then broke the silence by

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saying: "There is much behind this account that we can not understand and we never will learn the whole truth, but one thing we do know is this: that it will be a hard blow for St. Paul's parishioners to lose Bourdaloue; they will search a long time to find another man to fill his place."

"I am confident, mother, that one of his ability and courage will never again preach from the pulpit of St. Paul's."

"Yes indeed, he certainly displayed a wonderful strength of character in delivering fearlessly such a powerful sermon, that impressed many with the false idea that he is not a Christian, for stepping out of the church."

"Perhaps," defended Truth quickly, "he refuses to be labeled by those who do not really know what the word Christian implies."

"From his logical reasoning it appears that he does not wish to commit himself to any form of creed, but desires his freedom to preach the true gospel of Christ and live the principles he taught. I must say I agree with him perfectly. I never was an admirer of this implicit obedience, considered such a commendable virtue in religion, and whether he calls himself a Christian or not, he certainly practices more christianity and is more beloved by the poor and sick than any minister I know. I like his sincerity and honest way of doing things."

"Yes, mother, and he will continue to do far more good outside of the church, among the common people who are not welcome in St. Paul's

[illegible]

"Be not alarmed, mother. I can assure you that I feel quite equal to the task but I want you to be present at our interview—will you?"

"If you desire it—yes. Come, you must rest a while—I will come to your rooms at the appointed hour."

"Where is my wife?" asked Vallero of the servant, somewhat brusquely.

Quietly he mounted the stair, rapped lightly—opened the door and gazed at Truth in bewilderment.

"So I have been," returned Truth with grave courtesy.

"Well, I must say your illness has certainly agreed with you, for you are looking wonderfully fine. Allow me to congratulate you."

Advancing hastily towards her, he stopped short—. Seeing Mrs. Ralston seated on a partially concealed window seat, a quick frown spread over his face as he muttered with suppressed anger: "Why—I supposed this was to be a private interview with my wife!"

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"And so it shall be," replied Truth calmly. "There are no secrets between you and I, Clarence, that mother may not hear, and I have requested her to remain with us during our discussion."

Vallero bit his lips. His glistening eyes flashed at Truth a look of reproach as he scornfully said: "Now, Truth, do you call this fair play, and a decent way to treat a man? Am I not, as your husband, entitled to a little consideration, or have you asked your mother to shield you from any harm you think I may do?"

Truth's face flushed with indignation at this insinuating remark. She glanced at her mother, whose face betrayed the nervous strain under which she was laboring.

"To convince you," said Truth in a dispassionate tone, "that I entertain no fear whatever, I shall ask mother to kindly leave us alone."

Mrs. Ralston arose with a sigh of relief and without a word, left the room.

Scarcely had the door been closed when Vallero rushed towards Truth, as if ready to embrace her—. Impulsively she shrank back with a commanding gesture.

"Do not come any closer, Clarence. Because I have consented to be alone with you, shall not permit you to take an unfair advantage of my position."

With ill-concealed disappointment Vallero re-

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plied questioning. "Take advantages of my wife?"

"Your wife in name only," interrupted Truth, looking sharply into Vallero's piercing eyes. He became confused at her attitude of strength and the resolution with which she was confronting him so calmly.

"Why, Truth, my darling. I don't seem to understand"—he faltered, then pleadingly asked:

"Don't you love me any more?"

"Love you, Clarence——? No, no," sighed Truth, as a feeling of pity for the man before her crept into her heart. She continued firmly: "I know now that I never loved you, Clarence; never realized what the word implies. Under the power and influence of others I made a terrible mistake and wronged us both, by not being strong enough to break the obligation from which I begged you to release me the hour before our marriage. Right here, on this very spot, you overcame my fears and objections with the assurance that it was too late to consider my fanciful theory—and—we were married."

"And now that we are married and you have become my dear, sweet wife, why not make the best of it, sweetheart? Let us compromise."

"I'll ask nothing hard of you and will try to be more kind in the future, so you will in time learn to love me better——."

"Never, Clarence! After that terrible experience on our wedding night, you do not realize that you are demanding from me the impossible."

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Truth trembled slightly—as she flashed upon Vallero a look of pity and contempt.

"What a strange notion you have, Truth, that living with your legal husband would degrade you in any way."

"We won't try to reconcile them," remonstrated Vallero, impatiently. "What in thunder do I care what your ideals of life are? All I care for is you—sweetheart! Don't you know I love you, darling, as man can only love a beautiful, sweet woman like you."

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"I love you, darling—love you madly! I can no longer control my passionate love for you. The glance of your beautiful eyes—the touch of your flesh—makes the blood leap through my veins with a mad desire to possess you! "I will not give you up—for I love and adore you—you must become mine—do you hear?"

With superhuman strength, Truth released her arm, and struck a desperate blow upon Vallero's half crouching form—he fell upon the floor—! With one quick move Truth leaped to her feet—! Like a tigress at bay she watched Vallero spring to his feet again, pacing before her like an infuriated beast ready to leap upon its prey. With fascinated horror Truth kept her eyes steadily fixed upon his dark cruel face. Again he approached her, wiping the perspiration from his brow he panted heavily!

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[illegible]

“You dare to speak to me of love? Coward that you are—I despise you! You say you love me—Love?—Oh, give it some other and lower name—! The very atmosphere exhaled from your words and presence shrivels my soul with horror! You have proven in the clasp of your fiendish clutch, that what you desire to possess is my body, to gratify the cravings of your depraved mind, regardless of my heart—or dictations of my soul—”

She stared upon his distorted features with a speechless fear—! Then, as if some invisible power was guiding her hand, she mechanically reached for the bell and—rang it violently——!

Vallero stood baffled! Malignantly his eyes flashed from mistress to maid. With another curse escaping his livid lips, which in his defeat were drawn into a fiendish expression, he left the room like a whipped dog.

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"That damned Bourdaloue is to blame for Truth's visionary ideas. I'll make him suffer for it. I'll hound him to the end of the world—revenge is sweet. Fools—the whole pack of you."

Mrs. Ralston seemed frozen to the spot. Vallero's last words would haunt her to her dying day—no one will ever know what they were.—At last, surviving the shock, she thought of what might have happened to Truth. Quickly she ran up stairs to where her daughter sat like a marble statue.

"It is the last one, mother." "Come, sighed Truth faintly, let us now thank God for my release."

• • • •

Truth Ralston strolled into the garden and deeply breathed in the glorious air that greeted her. It was the first time since her illness that she had been out of doors. The garden seemed a veritable paradise. A profusion of fragrant flowers were bedded around the fountain, where in the rainbow mist, a score of feathered songsters

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Truth threw her arm along the back of the rustic seat upon which she rested. Her large blue eyes looked sad and mournful. A sigh escaped her lips as she thought of the care-free birds, whose joyous song grew plaintive in her ears. The murmur of the trees whispered of disappointed affections. The air oppressed her, its very clearness mocking the longing of her heart. How long she sat in her soulful meditation she knew not. Oblivious to time and her surroundings she was unconscious of some one standing under the rose tree, surveying her in silent admiration. As the watcher moved slowly towards her, the footsteps upon the gravel walk startled Truth from her reverie. As if suddenly awakened from a dream she raised her head and turned as if to go.

The sincerity of welcome reflected itself in the expression of Adoni Bourdaloue's face. He clasped both of her hands heartily, his pleasing apology for intrusion thrilled her with delight.

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and soul's desire, hastened her departure. Knowing this we look upon her going as the happiest event in her life. She has looked forward to it like one anticipating a delightful journey to some far clime where a great love awaited her coming."

"How wonderfully grand it is for you to believe this."

"I do not only believe it—I know it. Although Martha and I shall miss her sweet companionship, we know that our loss is our dear mother's gain."

"If one could only apply this sentiment in all our losses, then the loss to the parishioners of St. Paul's will be your gain."

Adoni looked pleased.

"Thank you, Miss Ralston—your thought is very encouraging, conveying that it has not destroyed your faith in me."

"No power on earth would be able to do that," exclaimed Truth earnestly, "but I must confess an absorbing curiosity to know just what your religious views are. Your sermon of last Sunday contained such a wonderful mixture, that one can scarcely tell what you do believe yourself."

Adoni smiled as he contemplated her words.

"Come, let us sit down. I have much to tell you in regard to my plans for the future. It may be some time before we shall be able to enjoy another visit with each other."

Saying this, Adoni led Truth gently to the bench she had vacated. Being seated Truth queried timidly: "Do you expect to go away from here?"

"Yes, I shall be ready to sail next week."

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"So soon?" A look of disappointment shadowed Truth's face. "You will join Mrs. Bourdalone?"

Adoni shook his head. "No, I shall not join Frances ever again."

His voice, grave and compassionate, filled Truth's heart with sadness and regret for her, perhaps, indiscreet question, which was apparently painful to Adoni as he continued slowly:

"Our paths have become separated. Frances has chosen her life among the pleasures of the world. Mine lies far above the 'world of things,' on a plane where Love is the motive power to do that for which I have been chosen. Without love and harmony in my home I cannot serve The Master.

Truth's eyes filled with tears as she faltered: "I hardly know what to say—so deeply engrossed in my own sorrow, that—all I can say: I'm awfully sorry——."

Instinctively Adoni placed his hand upon Truth's head and stroking her hair with a caressing touch of sympathy, he gazed into her tear-stained eyes, and replied tenderly:

"Be not sorry, little friend, the grief in your heart echoes mine. Our separation, like that of your own experience, was designed by an unseen hand, and the chains of an intolerable existence broken. For more than twelve years I have endured the torture of my soul, and have battled with the question, why a God of love would tolerate a living lie for which I have despised myself a thousand times. Bowing to the conventions of temporary creed, and human

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An involuntary cry of dismay from Truth's lips broke Adoni's sentences as she repeated wistfully: "Crime, did you say?"

Truth gazed at Adoni in speechless astonishment. Seeing the look of bewilderment and fear in her eyes, Adoni immediately resumed:

“How many women with high aspirations are forced to live with men who regard their value only to serve their physical gratification, dragging them down to a level with animal nature from which they are too weak to rise. Man again,

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doomed to live with a wife whose influence upon his nature creates a poisonous atmosphere, which in time kills his genius and powers for lofty achievements, and his life that might have been crowned with the glory of success, held in this mortal bondage, ends in a dismal failure!"

Truth devoured every word with intense eagerness. Then meeting Adoni's earnest gaze she bravely asked: "Do you honestly feel that we have no right to live a loveless marriage?"

"It is sin!" replied Adoni gravely. "Where love no longer exists, a man and wife, through the great eternal law, become divorced! Yet, man continues to live under the mantle of religious rights, working in opposition to God's plan, and thus affronts the 'Divine Majesty' to obey the law of man."

"But is this not done through——"

"Ignorance!" interjected Adoni with a voice vibrating authority. "'The influence thrown from opposing brain waves is a most destructive force, that has murdered more human beings than any other deadly disease.' And many times have I asked myself the question, whether we that are not ignorant of the psychological law and forces that govern our being, have we any more right to destroy our own life, than that of another——?"

"I suppose," replied Truth firmly as she gazed into Adoni's questioning eyes, "one human soul is just as precious as another to the Creator of love and life——?"

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"And the sin just as great to destroy it."

Moved by an inward emotion Adoni hesitated; gazed upon Truth's uplifted face, then in a tone vibrating with reverence said: "There is only one life for us to live. The Love life——"

A silence fell between them, broken at last by Truth's visible effort to change the subject, she asked sadly: "So you are really going to leave us?"

"For a short time—yes."

"And when do you return?"

"When the garden is fragrant with next year's roses."

"Then I shall not be here," sighed Truth.

Adoni looked the question. "Where then will you be, my little friend?"

"At school, teaching and working for the welfare of the blind."

"For the welfare of the blind?" repeated Adoni slowly—A look of astonishment lighting his handsome face. "I am more than delighted to hear you say this. Come, tell me all about it."

Truth related modestly her final separation from Vallero, then her entire plan for her life work, which she portrayed with such eager enthusiasm that it thrilled his heart with tender pride and sympathy for her noble aspirations. When she had finished her eyes were penetrating the very depths of his heart for commendation and encouragement. With love shining in his eyes, Adoni reached for her hand and pressed

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it gently.—His voice, low and sweet, had a tremulous note of reverence as he spoke most tenderly.

“God bless you, little woman, you have chosen a grand and noble work, in which you will be happy in contributing the power of your soul to the sightless ones. A work which appeals to every human heart. May the love of God radiate through your soul rays of sunshine into the darkened lives of our unfortunate brothers and sisters. And that they may through human sympathy feel the warm clasp of a friendly hand leading them to where divine happiness will emancipate their sorrows while imprisoned in a tenement of darkness during the short period of earth life. Your sympathy and the desire to alleviate their suffering will never be wasted. The world needs more of this divine quality.

“Go, dear heart, forget yourself in the service of others; learn the divine lesson of inward sacrifice that alone will emancipate you from your own sorrow and lead you to where spiritual happiness awaits you.”

Truth’s lips began to quiver—her eyes were moist—.

As Adoni continued, tears were rolling freely down her cheeks—. “Put the strength of your heart and soul force into your work—prepare the way for a glorious achievement, and when I return from the Orient, I shall be happy to assist you in this new field of work for the blind. Then together we shall labor for love of God and humanity, restore the sight of the physically blind, and open the eyes of those in spiritual darkness.”

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A flood of tears welled as from Truth's very heart. Sobbingly she endeavored to thank Adoni for his inspiring words.

"I do appreciate and thank you so much for your kind encouragement, and I'll try so hard to make myself worthy of your assistance. When you return Adoni——"

Truth was startled—became confused—her hand was sought and tenderly clasped, while eyes that thrilled her soul looked deep into her own.

"Repeat my name once more, Truth—it never sounded so well to me——."

"Where are you, child?"

"Here, mother,"—answered Truth nervously.

Mrs. Ralston came hastily along the winding path with a shawl thrown over her arm, exclaiming, "Oh, here you are!" Quickly wrapping the scarf around Truth's shoulders, "I'm afraid, dear girl, you have taken your death of cold already out here in this brisk air for more than an hour."

"Fear not," Mrs. Ralston, remarked Adoni pleasantly. "I can assure you that God's pure air will harm no one."

"Perhaps not, if we all knew how to properly apply it."

Adoni smiled.

"That is the whole secret of life. If one properly understood and obeyed the laws of nature, there would be no more sickness, sorrow nor pain."

"Mr. Bourdaloue, can you not remain to lunch with us? I am sure Truth and I would

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CHAPTER X

Adoni Bourdalone had never been an extensive traveler. Until now the delights of travel had been denied him and he intended his journey to bring him the greatest pleasure. He did not take a fast liner, preferring a slower boat that would be less frequented by his acquaintances.

To him the ocean voyage was a revelation, a fitting prelude for the strange scenes to follow. The cool breeze crisping the water, scattering diamond spray above the waves, made laughter over the sea; then the broken lines of sparkling glory subsided and a brooding calm hushed the laughing water into a tranquil mood.

Then came a spell of rough weather. The wind blew a gale, the sea began to heave but Adoni proved to be a good sailor, spending most of the time on the deck. It was glorious to be alone with the sea and war-like roar of the great dashing waves and the spray drifting in sheets off their crest. Again came fair weather, with starlight nights, superb sunsets, with the crimson and gold splendor returning at dawn like Venus from the sea.

Reaching England, Adoni spent a week in London, then again boarded ship for Calcutta. Through the giant gate at Gibraltar and the Bay

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of Biscay, followed a voyage of enchantment upon the blue waters of the Mediterranean and the peaceful drifting through the Suez canal with its weird deserts and herds of camels along the shores.

After passing through the mouth of the canal into the emerald sea beyond, sandstone cliffs burned with bright red radiance came upon his view. Sea and sky glowed like sheets of burnished brass. Here in the torrid heat of the Red Sea, Adoni longed for the cool retreat of the mountains, and was glad at last to land in Calcutta, and feel once more the solid earth beneath his feet and to enjoy the freedom of the shore.

In Calcutta, the brilliant blaze of oriental coloring was beyond his imagination. Towers, temples, palaces and bridges, presented a glittering architectural splendor. The whiteness of the priest's robes was in pleasing contrast to the scarlet, blue and orange-hued garments of the brown-skinned inhabitants. The tropical gardens, canopied by the cloudless Indian skies, made a deep impression upon Adoni's sensitive nature.

At Morshedbad, the once stately capital of Bengal, he saw the pillars and arches of the famous black marble palace, and was permitted to view the priceless carved ivory throne of its long dead ruler. Three hundred years before a pestilence had broken out and thousands died daily; burial became impossible; the dead were thrown into the river; contagion spread far and near and the city was deserted for all time. It had fallen into decay and now presents to the eye of the explorer

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Leaving Allahbad, Adoni journeyed through vast plains, among countless shrines and mosques, half hidden by luxuriant vegetation, coming frequently upon herds of elephants grazing peacefully at the outskirts of deep jungled forests of mango and tamarind.

Upon being told that its beauty was marvelously enhanced by moonlight, Adoni remained, and felt himself amply repaid as he gazed on its imposing splendor, shimmering in the light of the moon like newly-fallen snow. Adoni then listened to the story of love which this monument commemorates.

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Taj Mahal was built during the Mohammedan ascendancy by the Emperor Shay Jehan, in memory of his wife. She was the love of his youth, the light of his life, the mother of his children; who after fourteen years of wedded bliss, was called away to Allah's paradise. Like a spirit bereft, the emperor was inconsolable, and he honored her memory with the building of this tomb, which has since filled the world with wonder.

The next week Adoni found himself in the foot-hills of the Himalayas. Above towered the snow-capped peaks which cast their long, cool shadows on the parched plains below. From Simla he traveled in a jampan, borne on the shoulders of natives who proved to be trusty, sure-footed, and familiar with the mountains. The way led over yawning chasm and gorge, so close to the precipice of some overhanging cliff, that one wrong step would hurl the traveler into the fathomless depths below.

Days lengthened into weeks before the ascent from Simla to Rogi Cliff, the goal of his journey, was completed. He continued to travel over hills clothed with the sombre hue of pine forest; penetrating dark ravines, all clad in the same everlasting green, where even in the brightest mid-day the gloomy shadows still lingered.

Then followed soft, gray days, when the wind came down the gorge, tossing the dark plumes of the pines which moaned in echoing sighs like shadowy spirits of the trees, wailing dirges over their dead.

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Emerging from this primeval forest they came along the face of a tremendous cliff, where far below, the river Sutlej rushed down over huge boulders and water-worn granite. Rearing its massive shoulders high above the crystal stream, stood the Rogi Cliff, where nestled against its protecting walls a two-story chalet built in Swiss fashion. This was the spot where Adoni Bourdaloue was to make his home. Its surrounding beauty, with which he was confronted, surpassed all the wonderful scenes through which they had journeyed so long.

Alone, under the canopy of Heaven, Adoni gazed in silent wonder, thanking God for the glorious opportunity afforded him on these heights. The sublimity of its splendor far transcended his most exalted dream of dreams, from which he was recalled by the swiftly approaching footsteps of an Indian youth standing now before him, clad in loose, gold-tinted garb, girded about with a broad scarf of black and scarlet.

His head was covered with a cowl which partially covered the blue-black hair which fell in ringlets over his olive tinted face and neck.

The dark eyes looked at Adoni kindly, and in broken accent he said:

“The master awaits you—come.”

Silently they wended their way along a narrow, winding path, lined thickly on both sides with rare mountain flowers. Adoni inhaled with deep-drawn breaths the balmy air.

Silently he followed his mute guide who suddenly disappeared among the shrubbery. In his

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place appeared a tall, commanding figure robed in white garments like that of a priest. His face was young and intellectual; his gray eyes, luminous, gleamed like iridescent jewels. With a smile of welcome he extended his hand in greeting, saying in a voice that expressed all that was divine in human speech:

"You are welcome, my son."

"Thank you," murmured Adoni, with deep feeling.

"I have long awaited your coming."

"And I am happy to have obeyed the silent call."

"Come, let me take you to your humble abode, where you will find rest and refreshment."

They were now joined by the picturesque youth, who, with the aid of the faithful japa-bearers, took charge of the luggage.

Adoni followed his host and found himself in a large plain room with a huge fireplace built into the cliff which formed one side of the wall of the chalet. A large uncurtained window looked out upon the waving plumes that clothed the ravine, upon the foaming river below. The furniture was simple and of crude design. The walls were hung with rich-hued oriental stuff which half concealed the long rows of book shelves. Following his guide, Adoni ascended a narrow stairway leading to an upper room, also plain and bare. A small camp bedstead, a table, two chairs and curtained rack for clothing, completed its furnishings. From a large overhanging window a wonderful view greeted the eye. It was the

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majestic home of the forest king. The white peaks in the realm of eternal snow beyond seemed almost within Adoni's grasp.

"You will find little of modern luxury or convenience here except light and bath, which you may enjoy now after your long journey. When you have rested sufficiently you may join me again. We dine at seven, when the sun casts its rays through this open window."

The servant having brought the luggage—Adoni was left alone. For the first time he seemed to sense even more deeply the majesty of the ancient East.

After enjoying the luxury of the simple bath and a change to fresh linen, Adoni was attracted to several books lying on a little table. He turned the pages of each one indifferently until the last one, which riveted his attention. Eagerly he devoured its contents, seemingly forgetting time and place until he heard a silver toned bell chiming the hour of seven.

Hastily he descended the narrow stairs, where at the foot he was met by his host who conducted him into a small dining room. They were immediately served by the same picturesque youth with noiseless dexterity. The repast was simple, consisting of gluten bread, nuts, fresh vegetables and fruits.

"You appear to have suffered little fatigue from your long journey," remarked Adoni's host, surveying him with friendly scrutiny.

"No, indeed. I enjoyed the rough trip too thoroughly to become weary. It was a most

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tunities for development. Its tenets are in full accord with evolution and hold that there is no religion higher than truth."

Adoni listened intently, then with keenest enthusiasm said: "This thought has been the one dream of my life; for the realization of it I could give myself unstintedly."

A piercing look flashed from the Mystic's eyes as he replied firmly: "If you are found worthy, you will be given this opportunity to spread the light of this gospel in the West, for which you have been summoned here."

"Ah," said Adoni with a smile, "then I am right in concluding that you who are to be my teacher, are also one of the disciples of this philosophy."

"I am, if one may be termed a disciple of that which he is also the founder and leader."

Adoni was speechless. Moments passed—then in a reverent voice he exclaimed eagerly: "You are Ramen Bashinar?"

His host bowed smilingly. "And you are Adoni Bourdaloue. Although we did not observe the formality of an introduction we seem to know each other well."

With a puzzled expression Adoni protested. "But I cannot understand—it seems impossible—for Ramen Bashinar must be at least eighty years old, and you appear not to have reached the half century of your life."

A quizzical look of amusement fell from the eyes of Bashinar.

"I may not fulfill the required conditions of

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age, as I have trained myself to take no heed of time, which after all has no reality in life, which, when 'understanding the law,' should be lived for centuries. But of this we will talk later. You spoke of giving yourself unstintedly to spreading the Gospel of this new creed. Do you realize that to do this effectively requires your freedom from the trammels of dogmatic theology?"

"I have already severed my connection with the church."

"Further, it will be necessary for you to cultivate an open mind; live the highest ideals of human conception in a world of activity."

"Then you do not approve of those intellectual dreamers who devote their lives to speculation and abstract theories?"

"Not I," answered Bashinar quietly. "The man who isolates himself from every day life cannot understand nor sympathize with the need of humanity, and cannot appreciate human endeavor and achievement. Like the ascetic who retires into a monastery to fast and chastise normal desires of the body, he becomes an artificial product in direct opposition to the law of God, who gave us our faculties to use. The soul evolves through self-expression, rather than self-repression. Now let us comply with the law that requires rest and repose after the day's activities."

"Tomorrow morning, if it is your pleasure, we will go to Benares. It is the season for the annual pilgrimage to that holy city. This religious festival is an event that should not be missed, for it affords great opportunity to gain

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first-hand knowledge of the practice of millions of devotees to the Brahminical faith which has been in existence for more than three thousand years."

To this plan Adoni eagerly assented, assuring his host that it would be a pleasure that he long had hoped for. Bidding him good-night, he again mounted the stairs, and by the roar of the rushing river was soon lulled to sleep.

“The heart must be pure to be fearless.”

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CHAPTER XI

Clarence Vallero spent the winter aboard his yacht, sailing the southern seas. After his sensational marriage, it was the easiest way to avoid the embarrassing questions of a curious public. His vast wealth made him a constant target for newspaper comment, which ordinarily was not distasteful to him. Now, however, the notoriety had lost its savor, and from this he was glad to escape.

He was chagrined at the thought of losing Truth, whom he desired to possess with all the strength of his physical nature. She was a beautiful plaything to desire—he was a man—he wanted her and that was all there was to it. He would not long mourn the loss of one woman's love, however. His estimate of the sex put them all in the category of his wants which contained only that which ministered to his pleasures. He was consoled in the thought that the aristocratic world did not generally know that his wife had deserted him on their wedding night. Therefore his vanity was preserved and the loss of Truth to him was after all but a small factor in his life.

With the return of the spring-time he was back in his home town, securing a divorce on the grounds of desertion. His freedom and methods

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of living soon permitted his name to appear on the unwritten list of eligibles in the matrimonial market. His elaborate domicile needed a mistress and to him a wife was a necessary evil as he termed it. With the purchase price in his possession he saw nothing to prevent his choosing from the most charming debutantes of the season's "exhibit."

It was the first day in May when he reached the city, and it would require at least a month to complete legal negotiations for his freedom. He resolved to spend a few weeks trout fishing in the mountain streams of the locality which were famed for their speckled beauties.

He immediately set out on his excursion alone, making his headquarters at a small village within a few hours' ride of the city, and established himself at the country hotel.

The second day after his arrival, he was returning to the village from a day's trip with an unusually lucky catch. Taking a short cut through the woods, he was suddenly attracted by a flash of pink, darting hither and thither among the trees. On closer approach he saw a girlish figure gathering wild flowers which she placed with careless arrangement in a basket hanging on her arm. Vallero stood a few moments quietly watching her graceful movements, assuring himself that she was both youthful and pretty, a magnet which drew him boldly toward her. Startled, she looked up at the intruder, who lifted his hat in courteous salutation and in a suave, affable manner said:

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"I beg your pardon, lady. I'm a stranger in this part of the country. Wishing to take a short cut through the woods I missed the right path to the village; can you direct me to the main road?"

"Certainly, certainly," replied a sweet voice with ready graciousness. "Follow the path that leads past yonder farmhouse; on the second crossing you will strike the road to the village."

"And will it be safe for me to venture on this private domain?"

"Perfectly safe, I am sure."

"No one to arrest me for trespassing over these fields?" laughed Vallero, with an admiring look upon this girlish loveliness, who seemed to capture him at once with her winning smile. She assured him further that no harm would befall him as she could answer for the owner.

"Would it be a breach of confidence to tell me who is the possessor of these beautiful grounds?"

"They belong to my brother, Adoni Bourdalone."

Vallero gave a sudden ejaculation. "Pardon me," he stammered. "Did you say—Adoni Bourdalone?"

"Yes," assented Martha, meeting his surprised look inquiringly. "Do you know him?"

Vallero's thoughts leaped with lightning rapidity, trying to grasp this unforeseen situation. His guarded reply was given with a view to eliciting further information. "Not intimately," he replied. "I met him several times—in social

"Yes, and went to India last summer."

"We expect him home some time next month."

"Yes, mother passed away the week before he left."

"Then you must have felt lonely, indeed, being doubly bereft?"

"It is a very simple way," replied Martha with a grave smile, "if one understands the law of love."

"The law of love?" repeated Vallero in a tone that betrayed his ignorance. "I'm sure I never heard of a law—by the name of love."

"Then it certainly would be useless for me to attempt an explanation on the subject."

"A very interesting one, I'm sure—and when I have the honor of meeting your brother again, I shall congratulate him in possessing so gracious and charming a sister, left alone—."

"I am not entirely alone," defended Martha quickly, "my auntie lives with me now since mother left us."

“He went in obedience to mother’s request:

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to study with the wise men of the Orient. The time is not far away when he will return again, and then I will not be lonely any more."

"Meanwhile, why not let me help you to pass the time? Here is my card, you may have heard your brother mention my name; if not I believe I shall be able to furnish satisfactory credentials. Somehow I cannot resist confiding in you that I'm awfully bored up here alone, trying to kill time. I have a little boat on the lake, and expect my car tomorrow, and I can assure you, Miss Bourdalone, that I would be pleased and honored if you consent to share the pleasures with me."

"Thank you," replied Martha in a tone expressing involuntary eagerness to accept such a charming invitation. "You are very kind but I should have to ask my aunt's permission."

"And have I your permission to call for your answer tomorrow?"

Martha's face flushed.

"Why, I—think so," she returned hesitatingly as she glanced at his card. She felt a compelling force about this handsome stranger, as she followed his suggestion of allowing him to accompany her home.

After their long walk over fields and woods, they stood at the gate gaily chatting for some time, then he departed with evident reluctance, saying:

"Now you will not forget that I'm to call for you tomorrow?"

"You're to call for my answer," corrected Martha, laughingly.

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"I shall call for both," declared Vallero, in a tone that quickened her pulse and deepened the color in her face. Then lifting his hat with a last look of admiration he left her, she strangely confused, trying to formulate her impression of him clearly. Her thoughts were singularly elusive and conflicting as she entered the house, with her heart beating in a tumult, in happy anticipation of the next day's meeting.

Martha informed her auntie of all that had happened, and was delighted to hear her say that she had no objection to the stranger's company, so long as he proved to be a gentleman.

Promptly on the following day, Vallero stopped his car in front of the Bourdalone home. With a radiant smile upon her face, Martha greeted him at the door. Upon being formally introduced to her aunt, to whom Vallero paid most courteous deference, he deplored the small capacity of his car, which made it impossible for her to accompany them.

Martha was glowing with pleasurable excitement. This was an event in the colorless life of the lonely girl. Vallero, elated and confident, took his seat beside her, and they were off for a long, delightful jaunt over the hill country. The mountain air was like wine, clear, balmy and exhilarating. With each turn of the winding road, new and wonderful vistas greeted the eye in the ever changing scenic panorama.

Vallero was at his best. Handsome, debonair, with a manner respectful, his conversation bore the charm of audacious admiration, which

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"Your brother, I dare say, will have some strange experiences to relate upon his return from the land of mystery, where they perform all kinds of occult wonders, in which he is interested also, is he not?"

"I know he has already performed many wonderful cures, one especially that I know, a Miss Ralston, whose sight he restored about five years ago."

"He naturally would be," replied Vallero with a peculiar inflection. "This same young lady was very ill last summer, doubtless your brother treated her then also?"

"Too busy," remarked Vallero with a searching look at his companion, "to even remember an idler like Clarence Vallero?"

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the fates had thrown in his path, which would satisfy his desire for revenge. The thought of it gladdened his adventurous soul. He became more animated, surpassing himself in narrative and in the brilliancy of his repartee.

Martha responded to his gay sallies with hearty appreciation. She was happy. The ride, the scenery, the air, and most of all the charming personality of her companion, conspired to enrapture her soul.

In the soft spring twilight they returned home, where Aunt Martha invited Vallero to remain to dinner, after which they strolled into the moonlit garden. When at last he was ready to leave her, he had succeeded in ingratiating himself so deeply in her favor, that when he bade her good-night, the fervent pressure of his hand went unrebuked.

After that Vallero was a frequent guest at the farm-house.

There were long excursions over the mountains; long rambles through the woods; boating by moonlight; romantic evenings sitting together on the rustic seats in the garden, where furtive and ardent glances passed between them; quick flushes and sudden tremblings; deep sighs, long silences—at last stolen kisses, tender caresses and impassioned embraces.

Martha Bourdaloue experienced the delicious delirium of first love. She was swept along in the mighty current with a rapidity which left her confused yet unutterably happy. She adored Clarence Vallero. He filled her lonely life and

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heart completely; she loved him with the unquestioning trust of a little child and with the passionate ardor of a woman.

Vallero was more in love than he had ever been before. Martha's implicit trust, her unprotected helplessness, the sincerity and purity of her love touched even his world-worn heart, inspiring in it an unwonted feeling of chivalry. He delighted in their mutual affection, which made it unnecessary for him to resort to the influence he had exerted over Truth, and he felt a curious repugnance at the thought of employing it in his love for Martha. He delighted in the unconstrained adoration of her pure heart.

Again they were in the garden.

"Must you really go away, Clarence?"

"It will only be for a couple of days, darling, but to me it will seem like years. Are you sorry to have me go, sweetheart?"

He felt the quick indrawing of her breath and a quivering sigh fell from her lips. "I shall be so lonely for—I—love you so much, Clarence, that it seems as though I could not live without you any more."

Tenderly he kissed her, reassuring her that he would return in three days and then have a happy surprise for her.

"When did you say, darling, that you expect your brother to return?"

"I hardly know but I think he must surely be on the ocean now for otherwise I would certainly hear from him."

"Sweetheart, promise me that if he should

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"Adoni will do whatever is for my happiness," assured Martha confidently.

"Oh! Clarence, don't say that—you frighten me!"

"I will, Clarence."

She stole softly up to her room and sat by the window in the darkness. She could not sleep, the fever of love burned in her veins; she thrilled in ecstatic remembrance of his ardent embraces, and his long impassioned farewell kiss.

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CHAPTER XII

"But my dear Miss Ralston," protested Mr. Bailey, superintendent of the School for the Blind, when Truth had explained her desire to become one of its instructors, "you cannot be aware of the exacting demands of such a life; its depressing effect upon a sympathetic nature, such as yours. Do not think that I do not appreciate the noble impulse that prompts you to make this sacrifice but I feel in duty bound to warn you of its difficulties."

Truth smiled and glanced at her mother.

"I think I have already been reminded of every hardship connected with it, but I am not frightened, and do not look upon this work as a sacrifice. On the contrary, I am certain that I shall find both enjoyment and happiness in being of service to my blind friends, whose needs I know so well. It shall be to me a labor of love."

"You see," said Mrs. Ralston resignedly, "how useless it is to attempt to dissuade her. I have used every argument, but nothing save actual experience will convince her."

After considering for more than an hour the seriousness of this undertaking, Mr. Bailey remarked firmly: "Although, Miss Ralston, it may test your strength beyond endurance, we shall be

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glad to give you a trial, and I know the girls will be very happy to have you with us again."

So the matter was settled, and Truth Ralston began her new life, the following Monday.

In accordance with Truth's suggestion, her mother leased a pretty cottage located near the school, and each evening after the day's duty was over Truth wended her way through the shady streets to spend the night with her mother at home. Faith had come to live with them, and the two girls spent the evenings delightfully, with their favorite books and composers.

Faith Morris was a musician. Her natural talent for music had been cultivated until her proficiency upon the piano approached genius. Under her magic touch the instrument became as if alive, a medium of expression through which the blind girl's soul was liberated, soaring into exquisite realms of light and melody.

Once each week, with the assistance of other pupils, Faith and Truth gave a recital, and so popular did these musicals become, that the commodious auditorium proved too small to accommodate those from outside the school, eager to enjoy them. Another diversion which proved equally delightful, was the evening story hour in which Truth Ralston gave graphic descriptions of varied scenes she had witnessed during the five years of sight-seeing, and these drew a large number of eager listeners. Teachers and pupils alike flocked to hear the vivid word pictures revealed with such enthusiasm. Finally she was prevailed upon to give a series of talks for the

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villagers, the proceeds to be used in the purchase of a new grand piano for the school. Then followed the suggestion that she embody her lectures in manuscript and have them published in book form. This idea met with Mrs. Ralston's hearty approval. She felt a natural pride in Truth's unsuspected talent, which was extremely gratifying to her ambition and secretly entertained the hope that her daughter would eventually develop into a writer of note. So enthusiastically did she welcome the idea that she readily acquiesced in Truth's stipulation, that the proceeds of the book be given to those who could not afford a further education after leaving the school. Mrs. Ralston's enthusiasm in this undertaking was the hope that it might eventually wean Truth from the confining tasks of the school. She had viewed her daughter's success with maternal pride, but grew apprehensive in realizing her ability to accomplish great results in her work, which would prolong her stay in the school indefinitely. For Truth to continue long in the school was not at all in accordance with Mrs. Ralston's plans. She had confidently expected that at the end of a year Truth would become heartily tired of the monotony of her duties and would welcome a change, resuming again her old place in society. She had not relinquished the idea of an advantageous marriage for her daughter. Why shouldn't the girl marry well? She had youth, beauty and culture. With these assets the unfortunate episode with Vallero would be entirely ignored. The only difficulty would be in managing Truth.

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One evening as they sat before the cheery grate fire, discussing the all-absorbing topic of the proposed book, Mrs. Ralston, with the view of sounding Truth upon the subject uppermost in her mind, diplomatically turned the conversation to their future.

Referring to Truth's plans for the work of the coming year, Mrs. Ralston observed: "There is no question but that this experience in the school has developed you wonderfully, and I am proud of your achievements."

"Yes, mother, and you don't know how happy it makes me to think that you sympathize with my endeavors."

"I'm afraid there is a great deal of selfishness in my approval, which is principally for what it has done for you. It has not only developed you into a strong character, but served to divert your mind from your trouble, and I marvel at the way you dismissed the whole affair. It's fortunate that society really has a very short memory for these domestic fiascos."

"How could it be otherwise?" laughed Truth. "If society attempted to ostracise all who refused to drag the ball and chain of matrimonial wretchedness with them for the rest of their lives, it would end by casting the same verdict upon itself. For instance, how could society or the law possibly be judge of the difficulty between Clarence and myself?"

"It certainly should not," replied Mrs. Ralston, with spirit.

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"To me it has always seemed wrong that so delicate a relationship should be subject to public interference. If woman would only become more independent and display the moral courage you possess, half the tragedies of the world would be eliminated."

Truth smiled as she glanced up at her mother with a look of satisfaction, and asked quizzically?

"Haven't your ideas undergone something of a revolution, mother?"

"Yes, indeed, they have, but I fancy that a great many people do not employ revolution—but evolutionize their ideas concerning marriage and divorce when it comes into their own lives. I really believe there is a gradually changing attitude of society toward this serious problem and feel almost certain, that out of this chaotic state, marriage will be regarded in the future as human partnership, instead of an institution of tyranny where, through the law of man the bodies as well as souls are daily sacrificed."

Truth laughed heartily as she saw her mother so excited.

"It is just like you, you dear little mother, to take a business view of this vital question. But let us first of all consider the fundamental principle, that divine love only sanctifies a union, even though a thousand ministers declare it a holy bond. 'Marriage without Love becomes a sacrilege to God's eternal law.' The great trouble is, that so many young people mistake an infatuation for love, vow eternal devotion to each

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"Then," continued Truth, drawing a long heavy sigh, "after the poor deluded souls awaken from their fondest dreams, they find instead of having entered paradise, they have been sentenced to prison for life—and left to perish.—Like the honey bee, the lover having sipped all the sweetness from the fragrant flower—casts it aside to wither—and die."

"I sincerely believe, mother, and hope the time will come, that every soul will be taught and awakened to the knowledge that the main object of marriage, as God intended it—is the blending of two hearts with a love divine. Upon this law, reason and proper understanding, rests the salvation of the race, and I feel that the time is not distant when all those ready to enter into wedlock will be required to submit to an examination, morally, mentally and most essential of all—physically. Such a law enforced in this age of ignorance will be the only remedy to obliterate this social crime which confronts us daily."

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in Truth's work among the blind, called to make future arrangements for an automobile party for all those attending the institution.

Mrs. Chalmers, one of the society leaders, exclaimed enthusiastically: "Why, everybody I have asked seems to be perfectly delighted to donate their machipes and assist in whatever way necessary to have this first touring party a big success."

After completing all the details for the program for that day's festivity, the ladies took their departure with the consciousness that they had never enjoyed anything more in their lives, than being able to afford this little pleasure to the sightless ones.

"Isn't it glorious mother, that every day, men and women are awakening to the joy of service. Are losing themselves in a great cause, as we have done. Despite the heavy dark cloud that hung over our horizon, you have enjoyed my work among the blind, and instead of being depressed, have been uplifted by the 'Spirit of Love' and the service you rendered these afflicted ones, has given you joy, such as you never experienced before. Come now, own up, Mother. Am I not right?"

Mrs. Ralston made no reply, as Truth continued fervently. "This noble work in which you have assisted me so faithfully, is wonderfully adapted to your ability. Why not let your ambition center itself on promoting the welfare of the blind, instead of trying to secure social position for me? Society has no comparisons to

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Mrs. Alden did not look like a murderous crank when she sent this ungentle message to the chief executive of a great city. But by reason of that startling message she gained access to the office of the mayor and told her pitiful story. In explanation of her blood-curdling suggestion she told the mayor that it would be better to put the unfortunate babes out of their misery at a single blow, as she had intimated, rather than to continue letting them die by inches, as was then the case in New York, almost literally.

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love for the helpless and a yearning to do something to lift them out of their miserable existence, had a wholesome effect upon the good man of the big city and he promised to help—and about four years later his promise was redeemed, when he signed a bill authorizing an appropriation for the care of dependent blind babies.

And as Truth continued the story the wonders of the effect of self-sacrifice and devotion were unfolded. How an International Sunshine branch for the Blind was inaugurated after struggles, that taxed the patience and strength of the good woman who was the moving spirit of it all in that great city. The story told of the establishment of the home for blind babies, the first of its kind, for which Mrs. Alden had raised thousands by her personal efforts. This was followed by a winning fight to have the Home Kindergarten made a part of the public school system. These and innumerable other achievements were told in the story that Truth read to Faith and Mrs. Ralston. A story that thrilled and enlightened, a tale of wonderful results of human endeavor, where real god-given charity was the inspiration. A story of help for the helpless in a movement whose scope was bounded only by the borders of a nation. And, finally, a story of rich promises of the realization of the dream of Truth, that there might one day be erected as a monument to human love and generosity, a veritable Lighthouse for the Blind.

"Is it not deplorable," said Truth, at the conclusion of the story, "that while the afflictions

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of all other classes are cared for through public generosity, that the blind alone should be the subject of neglect and forgetfulness. And is it not wonderful what can be accomplished when the right kind of effort is put forth?"

"Yes," assented Faith. "It is all wrong to assume that just because we cannot see, we should be set aside as helpless. Fortunately I was able to obtain a musical education and have become self-supporting, but think of how many are shut into the world of darkness with no chance to earn a livelihood and become independent."

"The blind," replied Truth sadly, "are somehow forgotten."

Faith's eyes became moist. "More than forgotten—not even thought of."

"How true," replied Truth sadly, "when we stop to think how much is done for those who can see! Millions are given for their education; libraries, parks and amusements of every description; every movement is encouraged generously for the seeing world. But very little is done for the blind. To give them a chance to become self-supporting should certainly appeal to all who wish to help a worthy cause."

Mrs. Ralston listened attentively. "But my dear girls—there are so many worthy causes that need our help."

"This is so different," interjected Truth in a slightly impatient tone. "It is simply to help the blind to help themselves and to do this in a spirit of love is altogether necessary, to not

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"We are handicapped not alone through our blindness," said Faith. "Even though we are qualified to take good positions, how many would trust our ability or even give us a trial to prove what we are able to do? This makes us feel our terrible affliction so much more."

Mrs. Ralston and her daughter became the leaders of this movement, which spread with quiet rapidity, including among its zealous workers the members of all denominations.

Through faithful workers the American Association for the welfare of the blind was organized. And from these preliminary steps other and longer strides were taken, but the movement was still in its incipency. The hearts of the people must be reached, and through them a noble work can only be achieved.

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CHAPTER XIII

Although Adoni Bourdaloue had been but a short time at the retreat where the very atmosphere breathed of peace and contentment—of that satisfying sense of righteous living, he already felt the soul-satisfying influence of Bashinar and his teachings. The heart-hunger that had beset his being since he had burned his bridges behind him in the great church where his last words had stunned those who had formerly given him all but adulation, seemed to have grown less keen; he felt a peaceful realization that he was about to experience that for which his heart had yearned for many years. He realized the divine import of the teachings of Bashinar and knew, deep down in his own heart that he was nearing the consummation of that thought which had borne to him the promise of fruitful endeavor in shaping the spiritual as well as material destinies of the rising generation.

Bashinar was a wise teacher and his faith in Adoni was rewarded by diligent devotion to the spiritual teachings of this man, whose thoughts transcended material things. Adoni gave himself up to his influences and supreme guidance, but he was eager to be up and doing—eager to impart to the world the things which he was

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absorbing with unselfish zeal. And Bashinar gave him that inspiration that would make for unrestrained effort.

On this momentous morning, when the air was pregnant with inspiration and lofty ideals, Bashinar read from the treatise on the "Light on the Path" the tenets of the faith which formed the foundation to the great movement of human progress which was gradually, like a wave of light, rolling through the intellectual world. He read of the necessities in self-denial which the devotees of the faith must exercise, how ambition for worldly rewards must be restrained; how the higher ideals can only be attained by a desire to bring joy to the hearts of men through the science of right living and due regard to the omnipotent power which shapes man's destinies. And in closing his recital, Bashinar quoted:

"Look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm. Listen for a voice to speak where there is none to speak—it is a messenger that comes, a messenger without form or substance; or it is the flower of the soul that has opened. It cannot be described by a metaphor. But it can be felt after, looked for, and desired, even amid the raging of the storm. The silence may last a moment of the time or it may last a thousand years. But it will end. Yet you will carry its strength with you. Again and again the battle must be fought and won. It is only for an interval that nature can be still."

And then Adoni took the book and turned

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its pages slowly, reading over again those passages which had most impressed him. And at the very beginning he read again these words:

"Before the eyes can see they must be incapable of tears. Before the ear can hear it must have lost its sensitiveness. Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Master it must have lost its power to wound. Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Master its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart."

Adoni laid aside the book and seated himself opposite his teacher ready for discussion.

"You now understand, my son, that 'The survival of the fittest' is soon to be demonstrated by the unblemished law of natural science, which is once more swinging into place—and this time, instead of following in the footsteps of a few teachers, man will study under the teachers only as long a time as it takes him to learn to master the science; and knows that he is '*A law unto himself*,' '*A living soul*,' '*A creator of his own world*.' "

"This science of body, soul and mind, is not against religion, but with '*Practical Religion*' expressing a sympathetic, noble, loving Christ-like personality along our daily walks of life. "Man is the great psychological study of man today." It teaches that a man is what he thinks he is; acts the blossoms of thoughts; joy and suffering its fruits. Thought is the greatest power that drifts on the ocean of life; it moulds our character, shapes our destiny, builds our mansions and destroys them with what we

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Adoni devoured every word that fell from the lips of his wise teacher, then he asked with eagerness:

"This question is one most frequently asked by the western preachers. These so-called teachers are like the blind leading the blind. Among highly developed Orientals, the 'other side' need not be taken on faith but is actually known by the higher sense which is possessed by all the race."

A faint smile fluttered across Bashinar's face.

"This, of course," interrupted Adoni, "you are not able to give them?"

“Even so,” asked Adoni, “when the first glimpses of truth dawn upon the mind, does not the skeptical student require scientific proof?”

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"He does, and is usually disappointed. "Physical apparatus is intended for physical objects only. The world of spirit has its own set apparatus, which alone is capable of registering its phenomena. No physical proofs are offered; there are none to be found anywhere. Moreover there is no attempt or basis for argument between the seers of the 'Other Side' and those whose visions are limited to the earth plane." Even so there reaches forth into the mental night the groping hands of 'They who seek the Light.' "

"And we who have caught the vision," remarked Adoni sadly, "are ridiculed for striving to help them."

"Remember, my son, that fools laugh and deride what they can not understand. Though you may put forth all the ardent effort which fills your soul, you could not lead another into the light of true happiness, if that soul is not ready to go. Teach the ordinary minds, first, nothing beyond what the mortal eye can see; for not until man studies the Science of Life will he understand that life depends upon the invisible forces."

Adoni looked at Bashinar questioningly.

"Then the principle governing the spiritual realm penetrates as a controlling power, all activities of life here and hereafter?"

"Precisely, but this knowledge is never demonstrated to gratify curiosity. But when a man has proven his earnest desires with a heart and will strong enough to bear his part in the divine work, he will be called upon by the Master

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Minds and will be conscious of their presence, when alone, in the silence of his soul. These adepts need disciples to awaken men from their greed of earthly things which obsesses them, and to lead them out of Chaos into the Light. They of the 'Great White Brotherhood,' are ever in search for a disciple of Truth, and have watched secretly your development and progress, employing unseen communications with which you are already familiar."

"In a measure, yes," replied Adoni incredulously, "although I have received such communications only through my mother."

"Your mother. It is through such agencies, good, pure, honest and true, that we accomplish much, and now that she is out of her body, she will become happily engaged as 'Message Bearer' between the two worlds."

"How comforting is this knowledge. 'A truth working both in the visible and invisible.' "

"Of this, my son, you will learn much more—but this I say to you: When plunging into unknown depths, your strength will be tested to the utmost. Thousands of students of the occult laws, and philosophers, have entered into the psychical research and have become intellectually arrogant. Their Wills hesitated. They feared, doubted, and failed."

With scrutiny, Bashinar studied the expression upon Adoni's face.

"Do you think me capable of failure?" asked Adoni bravely, searching the mystical grey eyes illuminating with a love light.

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"We shall see. The voice of your own soul will answer your question. You can become 'King or Slave.' There is no difficulty that will not yield before a calm and powerful concentration of thought, and directing intelligently the Soul force. With love in your heart, my son, you will dream lofty dreams, and as you dream—so shall you become—. Your soul's visions are the divine promises of what you shall one day be. 'Your ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last unveil.' The greatest achievement was at first a dream—. Cherish your visions; cherish the music that stirs your heart; the beauty that inspires your senses, for out of them will grow all heavenly environment if you but remain true to them— Your world will at last be built."

With similar talk and instructions Adoni and his teacher occupied the long winter evenings at Rogi Cliff, discussing also the vital world movements, their relative merits and probable outcome. This stimulating exchange of ideas and experiences proved to be as valuable as were the studies which filled the entire day.

Adoni never ceased to marvel at the breadth and scope of his instructor's compass of thought. Ramen Bashinar was not only conversant with the ancient wisdom and occult laws but he was a thorough cosmopolitan as well, a man of broad culture and manifold experience.

"Then perhaps you will agree with me," said Bashinar one evening as they sat by the burning fire grate, "that progress in the west has not

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Adoni was deeply impressed by the intensity of feeling and profound truth which these words implied. He met the searching glance of his instructor, with one of equal earnestness as he gravely responded: "It dawned upon me long ago, that the gospel of the brotherhood of man, was to be practiced rather than preached. The world is hungry for righteousness that will give outward expression to the inner faith. I agree with you, that until the righteous condition is regenerated and firmly established, there can be no such thing as brotherhood and real emancipation of the toilers."

"Your words afford me great pleasure," exclaimed Bashinar, his eyes gleaming with responsive enthusiasm. "You have caught the spirit of the gospel for all humanity; a gospel that includes the emancipation of women as well as men—does it not?"

Adoni replied quickly. "The solution of the woman problem rests with themselves. The curse of commercialism, with its barter and sale of human love and its traffic in women, is largely responsible for her degraded condition and I believe that woman will never become economically free as long as she persists in pandering to

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the low ideals of those men who refuse to recognize in her anything but sex. She has been by nature dependent on the arrogant lordship of man, who assumes that because of his physical strength, woman must be subservient to him in everything. They have merely been appendages of men, suppressing their own natures, weakening their characters and blunting their sensibilities by false ideas of duty to their lords. It has always been a devotion requiring the surrender of body, soul and mind. If woman is ever to become free, she must develop her own individuality and cease being a mere foil for man's self-glorification."

"You're a long way from the poetic ideal of the 'sturdy oak and clinging vine,'" commented Bashinar with a smile.

"Indeed," laughed Adoni, "I confess that I desire not that clinging, enervating affection. I am not unmindful of the sequel that there comes a time when the oak becomes strangled and suffocated unless the ivy is sacrificed. Men are coming to admire less and less the type of woman who festoons herself about him in graceful incapacity. And women are becoming tired of the insincere flattery of men, demanding a more honest relationship, based on mutual respect instead of covert lust. In short they demand a sympathetic camaraderie and economic freedom, and they realize that a clean, sober, honest and healthy fatherhood is just as sacred an obligation for the future generation as holy motherhood."

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"And when woman has finally gained her freedom, what then, my son?"

"The emancipation of woman is the most vital question of the times, and most essential to the progress of the race. Without it, deterioration is inevitable. With it, will come regeneration and development; improvement financially, physically and morally. "The day is not far off when 'Woman will stand forth in her primal nobility, self-poised, large-minded, fearless, sympathetic—combining broad intelligence with deep sensibility, will become a mighty power and her passion for service and love for justice will make her a strong factor in the 'Redemption of Mankind.' "

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CHAPTER XIV

It was a beautiful, balmy spring morning.

The mountain world had burst its icy fetters and come forth radiant and smiling in the full glory of springtide. The air was pungent with the odorous breath of opening blossoms; the old forest was a-thrill with new life and melody. The day was too glorious for work and study. Adoni felt the call of the mountains and longed for a last solitary tramp through the forest. Taking leave of his teacher, he set out alone, plunging deep into the shadows of those majestic trees of God, the ancient deodars.

From every branch the tuneful cadence of bird music mingled with the deeper melody of innumerable mountain streams ringing through the dense forest like organ notes in some massive-pillared cathedral. Countless little wild creatures darted hither and thither across Adoni's path. He stopped a few moments to watch their gleeful play, then seated himself upon a fallen log to eat his mid-day lunch. Presently he coaxed a saucy little squirrel to come close enough to eat a piece of bread that had fallen from his hand. Soon others followed with timorous chatters until a score of bright, nimble creatures were capering fearlessly about him. The scattering of a hand-

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ful of crumbs brought a flock of twittering songsters to the ground. Adoni answered their piping notes with thrills of whistled melody, calling them with such skillful mimicry that they flew about him, friendly and unafraid.

At length he resumed his walk, breathing into his soul the exhilarating air as he wandered farther and farther into its depths.

After roaming several miles more Adoni became at last fatigued. Yielding to the restful charm of his surroundings, he flung himself upon a mossy bank at the foot of a giant cedar. Near it stood a tiny shrine erected to the sacred trees. Adoni contemplated it sadly. "Sacred trees," he sighed, "whereupon these strange people erect shrines, temples to mythical gods and goddesses, while they let man, infinitely more sacred, the image of the Creator, go houseless and hungry, ignorant and enslaved. How woefully have the teachings of the two great lights of India been perverted. Their clear and simple enunciation of the human brotherhood, of unity and love have been metamorphosed by a crafty priesthood into a labyrinthian system of worship. A maze of idolatrous practices has become an unfailing source of revenue to the powers that profit by the ignorance of the masses, well satisfied with the system."

What a train of reflective thought this little shrine awakened in Adoni, as his eyes were fixed upon it, soliloquizing gravely:

"While the church has been quarreling over creeds and dogmas, theorizing about a future

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life, original sin and predestination, solemnly warning the lowly against the sin of covetousness and revolt against authority, counseling patience, and submission to the will of God, pointing to a far off heaven for reward and justice, Mammon has taken possession of this material world, and established his kingdom upon earth, while the church, with brow of steel and heart of rock, offers ignorantly, to the multitudes of hungry souls,—a stone—in place of bread.”

“‘*Mammon* rules the world.’ This fact must be squarely faced, openly proclaimed and ruthlessly denounced! To overpower this giant idol, will be a herculean task, requiring strong men and brave souls to tear away the mask of hypocrisy, and awaken all the children of earth, to the degrading servility of *Mammon* worship!”

In rapt earnestness, Adoni had unconsciously given voice to his appeal. The stillness of the

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"Mammon! Mammon! Mammon!"

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darkness like a Star of Hope. It grew larger and brighter, slowly drawing nearer and nearer, until within its radiance, Adoni was suddenly drawn into the spacious interior of a gold-domed temple, where a vast throng of worshipers were assembled, kneeling in adoration before a gilded throne. Seated upon it was an obese figure, gorgeously appareled in a robe of sparkling jewels. All eyes were fixed upon him as upon a worshiped god of a nation's idolatry.

Unlike all other idols Adoni had seen, this one was alive. It rolled its protruding eyes in restless approval over the large assemblage crouching at its feet. When it laughed, the multitudes laughed with it; when it frowned, its worshipers turned pale and trembled.

At the foot of this dazzling throne stood an altar of fretted gold, studded with blood-red stones. Above it extended an arch, emblazoned with letters of bloody hue.—One word—*Mammon*.

From every part of the temple, offerings of gold were emptied into one large channel which poured its earthly treasures in a ceaseless stream upon the altar. The sordid melody of the clink, clink, clink, thrilled the listening throng with wildest ecstasy. The altar could no longer hold the heaping coin. It began to overflow. Instantly attending priests, with pious zeal, gathered it with slavish movements and cunningly concealed it in a massive vault behind the throne.

The golden stream continued to pour upon the altar. Mammon's smile broadened. He

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chuckled in miserly glee. Suddenly, his quick ear caught the diminishing tone of the clinking chant. Its echo sounded a dismal refrain. Mammon's features became rigid as the golden stream upon the altar grew smaller—the magic clink fainter and fainter, until the last chanting rhythm trembled into a mysterious silence, followed by a death-like stillness. A shuddering fear held the vast throng in breathless agony, all eyes riveted upon their angry god, whose smile became cruel. His jaw hardened into iron—his lips set into a thin inflexible line; his eyes began to roll like balls of burnished steel. The giant idol arose, stretched forth his arms with wild ejaculations as his voice thundered with tempest fury over the terrified mass of humanity.

"Ingrates!" he roared, "dost think thou canst stint thy god with scanty dole? Thy god by whose grace thou sittest in slothful ease. Imbeciles! To think that thou canst mock Mammon with paltry gifts. Up, and stir thyself! Get thee hence and gather treasure, nor come ye back with meager pittance! Such may be acceptable to thy dead gods, but I, Mammon—am *The Living God*. Who shall find favor in my sight pays tribute; those who serve me keep my commands—Begone!"

A horrible fear fell upon the stricken multitude. The clanging doors of the steel vaults sent forth a knell of despair to their quivering hearts. A sudden panic seized them. There was a wild rush for the door, madly they surged onward; crowding, jostling, trampling each other

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At last the struggling mass of slaves had fled; the vast temple was empty, save the priests who served at the altar. Tremblingly, one approached Mammon and prostrated himself before his throne.

"Verily, I say to thee, never in all ages has Mammon's work flourished so mightily—Speak! What sayest thou? Why am I thus robbed of my tribute?"

"Oh, Mighty and Merciless One! Supreme Subduer of the Earth! Thou art the Lord our God! Thy servants have set no living God before thee. They have served thee with all their hearts, minds and strength. They have borne false witness against their neighbor; have coveted everything upon the earth and all the wealth within it; have stolen with brazen effrontery and bribed

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the powers to sanction their thefts. They have killed honor, virtue and committed adulterous deception that thy power might wax strong in the land. Thy Servants have blinded men's eyes, darkened their intellects and broken their spirits. But oh, Insatiable One, have mercy upon us, for great is our tribulation. Behold, we have fallen upon evil days, lo, the rabble is rising in revolt. 'Tis whispered that the world's vulcan is waking from his long sleep. There is a stirring in the depths, and mutterings are heard threateningly. The humble are clamoring for *Justice*. Boldly they bawl from the housetops: 'Down with Mammon!' Yea, of a truth, they would wrest from thy pitiless hand the scepter that rules the world. They deny that the earth and the fullness thereof belongs to thee, declaring it is not God's will that they serve Mammon, the god of this world, and sacrifice their all upon thine altars. They refuse longer to eke out their days in misery, and protest against the toil of their little ones, against the debauchery of their daughters and luxurious lives of thy votaries. They will dethrone thee, mighty one of power, and hail *Justice* as Lord of the world therefore we are helpless to aid thee."

Mammon sat speechless with rage. His livid face, convulsed with madness was terrible to look upon; a torrent of hoarse and inarticulate curses burst from his throat; his lips foamed with a rising shriek, that resounded like a trembling echo through the deserted temple.

"Bah! What sickening idiocy! Hearken,

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priest! speed thee in all haste to these craven-hearted renegades; say ye unto them, that I, Mammon, *the living god*, do summon them in grand conclave, to devise means for quieting these ignorant drudges, lest they become unruly. Dost heed this message? Suffer naught to delay thee; let the fear of Mammon's wrath lend wings to thy feet. Begone!"

With stealthy tread, the trembling priest sped swiftly from Mammon's presence, locking behind him the heavy bronze doors of the temple.

Mammon was alone. Long, long, he sat on his gilded throne, his face distorted in dark, dark schemes of plunder.

At last he arose, slow and feeble. Mammon was old, centuries old. With uncertain steps he tottered forward and cautiously descended the long flight of marble stairs that led to the huge vaults behind the altar. His trembling hands unlocked the massive bronze portals, the golden hoard that greeted his sight thrilled his soul with magic delight. With miserly greed he dug his long fingers into the heaps of yellow coin, and as he thought of the thousands of similar vaults throughout the land, all his own, his cruel face relaxed into a satisfying grin. Delirious with joy he at length came out of the treasure house and began the toilsome ascent. Each step he mounted, commemorated in letters of blood the ruins upon which his temple was built.

When Mammon at last reached the gilded throne, his quivering form sank exhausted upon the hard, unyielding seat. Long he sat in the ominous

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He lay a bruised heap upon the marble floor. Blood began to flow in streams from his

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As Mammon saw his gold vanish from sight, a fit of madness seized him—! His eyes rolled wildly, and his chattering lips uttered one long agonized scream—! “My gold—my precious gold! Is there no one here to save my gold?”

Midst the rolling of thunder, the cry sounded like the subdued clamor of many voices shouting angrily—! Increasing at intervals into one mighty volume of million men bursting out with tempest rage—!

"Down with Mammon—!" "Down with Mammon—!" "Dethrone—! this false—and cruel god—!" "Banish—! from earth this cruel Monster and plunge him into his man-created hell!" "Down with him—down—down!"

Mammon clutched the foot of the altar with a grip of iron! In the frenzy of despair he dragged himself along the blood-stained floor—and tried to hide behind the altar!—But—a sudden clang of the—“Death-bell—!” made his body recoil with convulsive agony—!

A tumultuous roaring, like the cry of hungry beasts, rushed wildly upon his quivering form!—followed by—A crash of thunder—! A bolt of

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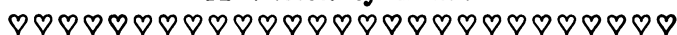
lightning—! A frenzied shriek—! And Mammon's body lay still. His long fingers twisted into the tarnished altar like the—"claws of a dead bird."

The raging elements began to heave the ground like billows in a storm! The throne, and the granite pillars began to sway—! The foundation began to crumble—and—sink! And,—the massive walls fell with a—dull crash—! Volumes of thick smoke rolled from the burning temple, and shrouded the—"World's Tragedy" with a mantle of black.

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Through the debris of the ruins, one human being was groping his way. Heavy clouds, hung low and—still. A sudden breeze cleft them asunder—! Slowly, they began to move along,—twisting and shaping themselves into witch-like forms. Chaotically they rolled and tumbled,—then suddenly—as if driven by fear—they fled from the land of darkness into.—Light!

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Everywhere, beautiful trees sprang up with magic grace, swaying their flowering branches above the dead. Fern-like shrubs were thickly spreading their leaves over the mounds, where human bodies with their earthly treasures were entombed. Bright blossoms were peeping from among the grasses, swiftly unfolding and weaving themselves into an exquisitely patterned carpet covering the ashes of Mammon's temple under which multitudes of human lives were destroyed. Adoni Bourdaloue was dazed with the marvelous transformation. In place of a miasmatic marsh were fields of golden, rippling grain. Where had stood gilded temples and stately mansions, were cozy, home-like cottages, built along the hillside. Underneath, a crystal river was flowing swiftly through flowering meadows, spanned gracefully by a white stone bridge that gleamed in the sunlight like polished marble. It connected an Ideal City, spreading itself on both sides of the rapidly flowing stream. The town was traversed by broad shaded streets, leading into numerous parks and playgrounds. No church spires pointed heavenward. Instead, from the water's edge, reflecting in its clear depths, stood magnificent stone structures of pure Grecian architecture. White-pillared buildings of Science, Ethics, Industry and Arts, were artistically grouped.

No palatial abodes adorned this city. The houses were modest and tasteful in design, each bearing the impress of individuality, presenting altogether a harmonious and charming whole.

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Farther down the river, the rapid current was harnessed to myriad wheels, whirling swiftly in mills and factories, all light and clean. Ringing bells mingled with the laughter of children running home from school, and men with contentment upon their faces were hurrying along from their daily tasks. It all presented a joyous, animated scene.

Presently in the midst of this happy throng, a pious looking individual made inquiry of one of the workmen who stooped to kiss his little girl who had come to meet him. The workman's face was good, honest and clear-eyed, and his voice cordially greeted the stranger's query:

"Can you tell me where to find a church or some temple of worship? Vainly have I sought in your broad streets but nowhere have I found a house of God."

At this question the working man laughed in good-natured raillery.

"My dear friend, in this, our beautiful city God dwells not in costly brick and glittering spires, but in the hearts and homes of every man. If you wish to worship in the spirit of love and truth, my little girl will show you the way." Bravely the little one reached for the stranger's hand and—"The child did lead him." Adoni was deeply impressed. As they walked away some strange impelling force urged him to follow them. On and on they walked through the busy streets, then suddenly became lost to Adoni's view.—Where had they gone?

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Reverently, Adoni bowed his head, and in silent rapture listened to the sacred melody! When the bells had ceased to chime their song, he lifted his eyes!—A mist, like a fluttering breath, fell before them, in which the busy thoroughfare vanished like mirage.

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In the far distance, a lustrous blue sky was touching a field of white flowers, like the borderland of the—"Beyond." Through—"gates ajar" the earth became flooded with a "Spiritual Light."

Adoni "followed Him"—and waited—at the garden gate. In a moment he saw again the

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wondrous Figure appear among the dense foliage—then quickly disappear—into the next cottage.

With fascinated attention, Adoni beheld in rapid shifting scenes, the stately figure glide from place to place, and like a—*Spirit*—enter every home in the “Holy City.” Again,—in the twinkling of an eye—! “He walked upon the water” then stood upon a silver wave—unutterably grand—and still—before Adoni Bourdalone.

Presently—! A cloud of scintillating light,—enveloped the angelic Figure,—it grew more lofty, and sublime—! Then swiftly—as if carried upon wings the—“*Ethereal Form*”—ascended to the summit of great Heights, and vanished within a—“*White Light*.” In descending rays, it fell upon the Mount, and shaped itself into a—*Cross*.

Adoni gazed upon that “*Mystic Glory*.” He trembled with awe—! His soul became suddenly thrilled with a holy passion to reach those “Heights Sublime.” As if obeying a divine command—Adoni followed—“A Light on the path”—leading along the—“stream of life”—through—“The Shadows of the Valley” then onward and upward—! Stepping into every footstep of his—“*Spirit Guide*”—Adoni climbed higher and higher, until—by some invisible power—he was lifted into “God’s World!” And there—alone—he stood before a closed Gate-way.

A profusion of tropical vines, and flowers of rarest beauty, overhung the “jasper walls.” Bright plumed birds flew joyously, amid the

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From that great—"Within"—a voice proclaimed: "Seek and ye shall find." Adoni's yearning love grew stronger—! With his soul's desire he approached the door—and fearlessly knocked! With magic grace the—"White-winged Portals" opened wide—! And Adoni Bourdaloue was borne on a wave of light—into the "Garden of Eden."

"What hallowed peace!"—Alone with God! In that sacred stillness—Adoni heard—"the music of the spheres." A far reaching echo fell plaintively upon the listening air—! The tremulous tone sounded to Adoni like—the cry of a lonely being. A soul—seeking,—its mate.

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In that silent hush of expectancy—Adoni heard the beating of his own heart—! Then a voice—like the murmuring wind among flowers startled him—! His eyes were directed heavenward,—and were held—charmed—on one spot—!

A rainbow-tinted cloud floated upon the earth! With waves of rippling light, it rolled swiftly towards Adoni, and—with wondrous changing colors—parted—! A cry of ecstatic joy fell upon the strained silence!

Within a radiance of light— Adoni beheld—!
“A VISION OF TRUTH.”

“The smile of God” shone upon her beaming countenance; her large soulful eyes looked into Adoni’s with tenderness and yearning! A wreath of golden sunbeams was woven in her beautiful hair, that hung a waving mass upon her white shoulders, veiled with a silvery gauze, that fell in softest folds around her graceful figure.

In devout silence,—Adoni gazed upon Truth in “Form Divine.”

With outstretched arms, and noiseless tread— she glided to Adoni’s side —Whispering—as softly as one breathing a prayer—!

“At last—! My Love,—has come to me—!”

That great moment of—*Realization*—awakened Adoni from his mute entrancement! A magnetic love wave rushed over him, and he was swept with a mighty current to the—One—he adored, and knelt in silent worship before her—!

With infinite tenderness, Truth laid her hand upon his bowed head, and sweetly murmured—!



A VISION OF TRUTH

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Those tuneful words falling from the lips of Truth, penetrated like a lightning flash to the center of Adoni's being, and roused him from his half swooning sense! In the glorious delirium of love, he reached for her hands, folded them upon his throbbing heart, and pressed his lips long, and tenderly upon them!

In a transport of happiness, Adoni bounded to her side, drew her angelic form unto his breast,—and with holy passion trembled—!

A delicate flush, like the morning light of a perfect day, illumined Truth's angelic face—! As they looked deep into each others adoring eyes—their love—like a dual flame—arose from depths of long repression into—heavenly bliss—! There—! in the communion of soul's—their lips silently met—!

Startled with awe— Adoni lifted his eyes—!

With infinite gestures— He raised his hand—! And—"A Voice"—full of human tenderness, and divine authority, addressed him:

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"Because thou hast been a faithful servant, and followed me, I demand thy love and service for all humanity! 'Let your light shine,' that my children in Spiritual darkness, may find the way to the—'Kingdom of God,'—and your heavenly father will glorify in your work, that will establish upon earth a—'Kingdom of Love—.'"

As Adoni gazed into those unfathomable eyes—his soul was thrilled with divine ecstasy—! "At Love's high altar"—with Truth in his arms he knelt at—"The feet of the Master."

From the great "Fountain of Life" water began to fall in holy benediction upon their heads! Through clouds of golden vapor, angel faces were radiating smiles of love! Hands were delicately weaving wreaths of flowers, with which they crowned the twain pair as *King and Queen* of the "New Jerusalem."

Sweet harp music was played to the song of an invisible choir! Through dazzling rays of light—the glorious symphony—trembled into a grand—Amen!

The heavenly music—throbbed into a melodious echo,—and died—in the deepest silence. The radiance of the sparkling fountain grew pale—then fainter—and—vanished!

Under the shade of the old deodar trees Adoni Bourdaloue, awakened from his long sleep. Slowly, he raised his head from the ground, and bounded to his feet! Placing his hand upon his forehead, he gazed about in disappointment—! And—with a long trembling sigh, exclaimed: "*Only a dream—!*"

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CHAPTER XV

The night had at last arrived for Clarence Vallerio's return.

At an early hour, Martha beguiled the time at the piano until her aunt departed for the village. After kissing her good-bye she hastily went up into her room, and with infinite pains sought to make herself charming for her lover's return. She was unusually solicitous about arranging her hair, brushing it until the long, wavy strands shone like gold, twisting them into a most becoming coiffure. She chose the soft pink gown she had worn the day he had met her gathering flowers, the gown he liked best to see her in. Its low cut neck and short sleeves revealed her full white throat, her shapely arms and dimpled elbows. When she had finished dressing and saw her reflection in the mirror she smiled approvingly.

"Clarence says that I am beautiful," she mused half mockingly. "I suppose all lovers talk in the same way. Still, they say happiness is a great beautifier. It really has improved my looks wonderfully since love came to me. Love!" she breathed heavily. "How it seems to transform and glorify everything! How colorless and dull my life was until Clarence came into it."

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"And how terribly lonesome I have been since he has been away from me for a few days. Now, in an other hour, I shall see him. How my heart begins to beat at the thought of being held in his arms again. Oh, I am so happy—I just wonder if any one ever loved as we two. What would I do if anything should ever happen to separate us?"

She shivered slightly. "Strange how such a thought persists in haunting me. It has weighed upon me all day like a nightmare—I can't shake it off. Even now, when the joy of his sweet kisses already thrill me, there creeps over me a strange feeling of something like—fear." Again she trembled. "I can't understand why I should feel this way, my heart longing to be with him and yet at the same time something holding me back; a strange feeling of reluctance to meet Clarence—almost as if it were wrong to be with him alone tonight."

For a few moments she sat down in grave meditation. "If there were only some one in whom I could confide."

As if following a sudden impulse, she arose and took from her dressing table a quaint old fashioned chain and locket. Opening it she gazed silently upon a dear face within. With quivering lips and tears rolling down her cheeks, she questioned tenderly. "Mother, do you know my secret—you and father? Are you glad to see me so happy? What? Mother dear," she exclaimed in whispered tones. "Why do your eyes look at me so sadly?" She took the picture

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to the window and held it in the waning light.

"How strange that I thought your eyes looked at me so appealingly. It must have been this depressing mood that distorts everything."

She held the picture to the light upon the dressing table, turning it at various angles, trying to catch the smile that had so mysteriously vanished. At last with a deep-drawn sigh she placed the locket in its case, hesitated a moment, took it out again and clasped the chain around her neck

"I want you to be with me tonight, mother," whispered Martha tremulously, pressing the dear picture to her lips and choking back a sob that filled her throat with a threatening outburst.

"For I remember what you so many times have told me—that your love would guide and protect me always. Why then should I doubt when I most need you, mother, or hold this foreboding thought or premonition any longer? I know you will not forsake me tonight."

Throwing about herself a light grey mantle and hood she stepped cautiously from the house and out into the garden, lighted dimly by the crescent-shaped moon.

As she stepped forth along the walk, she glanced furtively about. "How dense and ghostly the shadows lie among the trees!"

"I'm almost afraid to cross the lawn. Hark, what was that? The night birds are calling. No, that was not a bird—it is Clarence whistling for me!"

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"I cannot go on," she murmured.

"Mercy, what was that? How frightened I am! I feel so faint—and weak—that I can hardly stand."—

"Darling, I thought you were never coming. Didn't you hear me call you, sweetheart?"

"It was your own shadow you saw, darling," interrupted Vallero nervously.

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"I feel safe enough now," she added softly, "when you hold me in your arms." Yet Martha shivered—"This horrible fear creeps over me again."

"Has anything happened that should—has your brother returned, sweetheart?"

"No, and I have had no word from him. Oh, Clarence, you don't think anything has befallen him that I should feel so depressed, nervous—as though there was a great danger—of something that would separate us?"

"No, darling, no. I have provided for that which will never part us again. Listen, dear heart—I have been suddenly called abroad."

He felt her tremble against him. "There, there, dearie, don't be alarmed. You shall go with me."

Martha gave a startled cry. "How soon must you go, Clarence?"

"Tonight."

"Tonight?" she echoed blankly. "Why, I—couldn't go tonight."

"What would hinder you, darling?"

"What would hinder me?" she repeated doubtfully— "Why, Clarence, you surprise me to ask such an impossible thing. Go away with you, tonight!"

Gently he smoothed her hair and his trembling voice betrayed his disappointment and deep feeling, while he kissed her quivering lips passionately.

"It is only, sweetheart, that I cannot endure to leave you again so soon."

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She clung to him in terror. "Must you go tonight? Can you not wait——."

"Impossible," he exclaimed impatiently. "The business requires my personal attention. The thing is imperative. I tried hard to get a substitute and in every conceivable way sought to evade it but it was of no use. When I found that I had to go, I knew, darling, that I could not leave you behind and that you must go with me, to become my wife. For this I have made every provision. My car is at the foot of the hill and in it is everything my little bride will need tonight. In the morning we will be married; then on to New York and aboard my yacht, which will be waiting for us. Won't we have a glorious honeymoon, darling? Will you come, sweetheart, to be mine forever?"

He entreated her passionately, pressing his lips to hers, waiting for her answer to his pleading.

"Why, Clarence," she said reproachfully, "that would mean eloping—running away from home—without Don or Auntie knowing anything about it. No, dear, I could not do that," she faltered.

"If you must go, although it will be terribly hard and lonely for me, we must wait until you return, and then I'll become your wife in an honorable way. Your way would be wrong."

"But, Martha, dear, think of the long months of useless separation, and all this precious time of our lives lost in misery away from each other."

Instinctively she recoiled from his arms.

Vallero continued, in alarm at her sudden movement, and drew her quickly back into his

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embrace saying: "There is nothing wrong about it, dearie. Hundreds of people are married in just such an unexpected way."

"It is wrong, nevertheless, for me to do this. I am sorry, Clarence." She choked back the tears that were welling from the depths of her heart, then firmly exclaimed: "No, I shall not run off in such a fashion."

Vallero felt the ring of finality in her tone and knew the uselessness of persuasion. For a few moments a painful silence fell between them—then encircling her with his arm he asked her pleadingly:

"Is it that you do not love me sufficiently to trust me, that——."

She put her hand over his lips. "Hush, Clarence—I do love you, and I also love my brother enough not to bring a shadow of disgrace upon his good name. If you love me, as you say you do, you would shield my honor instead of tempting me to do what I know in my heart to be wrong."

Vallero felt the shudder of her form as she continued falteringly:

"Clarence, forgive me if I wound your feelings, but that strange fear creeps over me and a voice within me whispers to me now that you love me not purely, that——"

"My God, Martha, I love you so much that I would not harm one hair of your head! Listen, my beautiful one!"

At this moment a gleam of moonlight fell

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upon her uplifted face. How pale it looked as she listened to his ardent pleadings.

"I love you—love you! I would give my life for you! Look deep into my eyes, darling; and read in my heart what I feel for you. Mine is a love that I am not able to express—I love you so, Martha, that I cannot leave you again—If you love me—you must prove it by trusting me completely. I have a right to demand this of you now." Vallero was piercing her with his powerful eyes.—"You must come with me now, Martha—put your hand in mine.—There—that is a dear, brave girl. Now, come, let us hasten to the car.—Hark! What was that——?"

Vallero glanced behind him.—"Some one is coming—quick, darling, into this arbor!"

He snatched Martha close to him and started for the arbor, but—he was too late—.

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CHAPTER XVI

The morning for Adoni's departure from the Orient had arrived. At an early hour he was seated in the garden with his host, who had been an attentive listener.

"Your dream, my son, was indeed very wonderful."

Adoni sighed. "Yes, I am sorry to think that it was only a dream."

Bashinar smiled. With a twinkle in his eye and enigmatical expression upon his face, he replied sweetly.

"Perhaps I can help you to define your dreams."

"You can?" asked Adoni eagerly.

"It is now one year since you entered the Hall of Learning. You have become a chosen disciple of the 'Great White Brotherhood.' Under the influence and psychic impression upon the medium of your material brain, prophetic visions have been unscrolled unto you. Mid shifting scenes, you have witnessed the worship and destruction of Mammon's temple. Out of the ruins of human destruction you have seen the resurrection of life. A new world, illumined with the smile of God. Step by step you have climbed to Heights Sublime. Listened to the song of angels

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region that his dream of happiness was to be realized. Yet the more seriously he reflected, the more he felt that the very remoteness of place and the poverty of its people possessed rare advantages for his purpose, which could not be found in a town where men were more liable to be swayed by greed for gain, and less inclined to lend themselves to the co-operative project which he had in view. Adoni wished to assure himself of the possibilities of the region and consult with its people, before he formed a definite plan for his future.

Upon landing in New York he found that the only train which stopped at the little hamlet did not leave until the following morning. As he was determined to visit the place of his first charge before leaving for his own home, he spent the afternoon looking about the city. After dining alone at the hotel, being weary of sight-seeing, he went directly to his room and retired early, in order to take the train which left at an early morning hour.

For some unaccountable reason Adoni could not sleep; the bed was comfortable enough, but he continued to toss restlessly from side to side.

The dull roar of the seething sea of humanity below came to him through the open window, but disturbed him less than the thunder of the ocean. It was not the noise that rendered him sleepless. Adoni felt a strange tension of nerves, sensed an inward zeal for action. In vain he sought to relax the tension to induce a more

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reposeful mood. So complete was the dominion which he had gained over himself that usually the command, "Peace, peace," had been sufficient to tranquillize his spirit. Now, however, he repeated the command over and over again, without avail. At last in his troubled frame of mind he arose, flung himself into his lounging robe, and sought to compose himself by reading, but was unable to keep his thoughts upon the printed page. Thrusting it quickly aside, he began to analyze his feelings, but arrived at no conclusion, for suddenly the room became suffocating. Could it be that fire had broken out somewhere? Adoni opened the door and began to investigate in the corridors but detected no smell of smoke.

When again he re-entered his room an uncontrollable impulse seized him to leave it again and flee from the place—but whither, and for what purpose, he knew not. Could he have mistaken the time for the train to leave? Assuring himself that he had made no error he consulted the schedule. Swiftly his eyes travelled down the column—then became riveted upon the name of his home town—the letters seemed to glow upon the page in startling distinctness, and boldly significant. The train would leave within an hour—an overwhelming desire to reach his mother's home seized him.—He tried to reason with himself that the idea was preposterous; to abandon his fixed plans was childish. Yet, while he argued with himself he was beginning involuntarily to make preparations for his immediate

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departure, and was in an incredible short time leaving the hotel. He hailed a taxi and was hurried to the station. And not until he boarded his home-bound train did the tension of his nerves begin to relax. While the feeling for immediate action subsided gradually, he became ill at ease every time the train halted, and counted the minutes with tense eagerness until it started again. When, to Adoni's great relief, it stopped at his destination, he swung himself lightly from the platform, entered the lunch room for a cold glass of lemonade, drank it feverishly, picked up his grip and in a few minutes was rapidly walking through the village streets and over lonely country roads.

The night was singularly like that June evening a year ago, when he had been impelled to go to his mother's bedside in response to Martha's letter, but now he was following the dictations of a voice within, and yielding to an irresistible impulse which was urging him speedily through the still, oppressive night.

At last Adoni arrived at the dear old homestead, opened the old-fashioned gate, almost ran along the walk, mounted the stair and without rapping, entered. Quietly he removed hat and coat, set his grip upon the hall stand and tip-toed into the living room. It was deserted—With a strange feeling of disappointment at not meeting his dear little sister, Adoni glanced about the room, went back into the hall; hearing a voice from the kitchen rushed through the door in happy anticipation of finding Martha

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I suspect—of course I'm not really shure about it, only believe that she expects to be—Miss President—”

“Wouldn't that be fine, Agnes, to have a president in our family?”

“An' faith, it would be a rale joke.”

“Only a joke?” questioned Adoni, with a smile.

“She said, whin she left the house, that if anything big happened she would stay all night.”

“All night, where and what for?”

Agnes shrugged her shoulders with a mischievous chuckle. “To cilibrate I s'pose, as all prsidents do and—”

“But where is Martha?” interrupted Adoni, knowing well the passion Agnes had for gossip and if given rein would continue untiringly.

Agnes shook her head sadly. “Miss Martha, you mean?” With a tone of wounded pride she continued: “Oi'm not shure where she wint—she didn't tell me—she had on that lovely shwate driss, that pink one, with all the ruffles round her low-cut nick and shlaves—”

“Never mind about the dress, Agnes, just tell me—”

“And shure, Oi'was jist going to tell ye that Miss Martha was playin' the piano while I was washing me dishes when—soddenly that dang cat joomped across me dishpan—oop on the cubbard, knocked your mother's best china t'apot over, smashed it into smithereens and caught the mouse—”

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enough for a half dozen hungry persons. As Adoni had not yet completed his toilet, Agnes placed the tray on a small table, arranged it all very tastefully, then left the room. When Adoni returned to eat his lunch, and saw the big spread before him he could not help smiling. He drew his mother's favorite chair up to the table, seated himself comfortably, and enjoyed heartily his first meal at home. After he had finished, he reached for an open book lying on a stand close by—glanced at the name—

The Life Everlasting.

Being a great admirer of Marie Corelli's writings, Adoni turned several pages of the book, which was unfamiliar to him—became interested, and began to read the following extracts:

"Life is the Divine impetus of Love. The force behind the Universe is Love and from that Love is bred Desire and Creation. Even as a human lover passionately craves possession of his beloved, so that from their mutual tenderness the children of Love are born, the Divine Spirit, immortally creative and desirous of perfect beauty, possesses—"

Adoni looked up from his book and sat for a few moments in deepest thought, then resumed his reading.

"The whole Universe is open to the searching of your Soul, if Love be the torch to light the way."

Again Adoni lifted his eyes and repeated the words: "If Love be the torch to light the way"—eagerly he continued to read:

"Thought is the voice of the Soul. Just as

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Adoni once more lifted his head and looked around.

Seeing no one, Adoni sat several moments in perplexed thought, then again attempted to read. "The Lovers of God are the beloved of God, their passion is divine, knowing no weariness, no satiety, no end; for God is the Supreme Lover and there is nothing higher than Love——."

"I thought I heard some one calling me—yes—there came a voice—very faint and feeble—calling—Adoni—."

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was there concealed, trying to play a joke. But—she was not there.

“Martha dear, are you hiding from me—?” Adoni shook his head. “How strange that I should be so mistaken.—”

Unconscious of the white robed form appearing within the folds of the curtain, and following him closely to his chair, Adoni again seated himself, picked up the book, attempted to read, but could not. With a sudden impulse he closed it, sat with his head leaning upon his hand, reflecting seriously. While trying to analyze the feeling of mystery that was stirring in his soul, two loving arms were wound around his neck, and lips pressed long and tenderly upon his forehead. At its touch—Adoni rubbed his hands across his eyes, and gave a shivering sigh.

“What influence is this that so strangely impresses me——?”

“It is I—your mother——.”

A slight tremor shook Adoni’s body.

And as a trembling voice whispered close to his ear: “Adoni—Adoni, my son—listen—my boy——.”

Adoni startled and glanced nervously about—.

“I am positive I heard my name called——.”

“You did—you did,” the mother wailed, as she reached for his hand, “come, come with me—Adoni——.”

“That surely is Martha calling me——.”

“It is I, Adoni—your mother—can’t you hear me—can’t you see me—Adoni—Adoni——”

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Like one receiving a terrible shock—Adoni staggered backward! He pressed his hands upon his head, and from his toneless lips fell the name of “Val-le-ro—!”

“Vallero—Vallero—!” he stammered several times, then cried out in a voice of appalling terror. “My God! Why should I speak that name while looking for Martha?” Adoni shuddered! “I know now, that she is in danger somewhere—but where—Oh God!—where—?”

“In the garden!” moaned the mother in agony, and clung desperately to his hand. “Haste, haste, my boy, or you will be too late—!”

Moments in which Adoni was striving to control his trembling spirit passed—then suddenly as if drawn by some invisible power he reached for the door, and rushed madly into the garden.

The light of the moon reflected its dismal shadows upon the gravel walks winding through the spacious grounds, along which Adoni was mechanically speeding. Realizing not where he was going in his frantic search for his sister, he dashed on and on between beds of flowers and dense shrubbery, in which were concealed numerous benches and vine-covered garden houses. Having just passed one, Adoni stopped short!—A shadow in human form flitted across the path-way! With extended arms from which hung a fleecy gray drapery the ghost-like figure darted from one side of the walk to the other, as if trying to prevent Adoni from going any farther.

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"Married, tonight!" interjected Adoni, vehemently—"Married to that scoundrel? My God, Martha, you do not realize what you are saying. Does a man who loves a woman induce her to a secret place at this hour of the night to marry her? No, no, the villain means to dishonor, then desert you—."

While Adoni was loosening Martha's arms about his neck, Vallero sprang toward him, but with a quick skillful movement Adoni warded him off with a hard blow. Vallero staggered backward, the shock of the blow stunned him for a second, then tempered him to a madness in which he leaped furiously upon Adoni.

Vallero did not finish his sentence; another masterful blow hurled him violently to the ground.

Adoni came to Martha's side, quickly raised her from the ground, led her to the opposite bench of the arbor and seated her upon it. While attempting to quiet her fears, Vallero was stealthily crawling upon his hands and knees. Then,

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Adoni Bourdalone was the taller and more powerful of the two men, and with the strength of a giant he forced Vallero to the ground and held him there without mercy.

The men struggled ferociously. The excitement of the combat was beginning to tell; their breath came in hoarse, labored gasps, each battling with brute force. It would only be the question of endurance as to which would be the first to succumb.

Martha, aroused at last from dumb terror, screamed out once more in a frenzy of despair. "Stop, stop, Clarence, Adoni, stop for mercy sake stop—you are killing each other."

Heedless of her cries the fight grew hotter and more terrible, until Vallero at length loosened his grip of vengeance and moaned with pain—begging thickly, "Spare me—save me—"

"Save you!" panted Adoni, with a maddened tone. Yes, I'll save you from committing any more crime; save you from yourself, slanderer, seducer—hell is the place for you. The devils are waiting for such as you—writhe if you want

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foot of the stair—he could go no further.

Footsteps were hurrying along the roadside—a girlish figure opened the gate—hastily entered the garden—and ran breathlessly along the walk!

Adoni startled—! “Martha—you alone—!” His whole body shook—! “Where is Vallerio—?”

“Come, brother dear,—you are sick, Don—very sick—! Come into the house, brother, and I will explain all—!”

Adoni arose to his feet—! Tremblingly he placed his arm about his sister’s waist, and she supported the weak man into the still lighted room.

With a long shuddering sigh, Adoni sank into his mother’s chair—and sobbed—bitterly—!

As the morning light was breaking through the darkness of that terrible night, Martha was still seated on a low stool beside her brother—her head lying wearily, upon his knee. She had told the story of the tragic night.

“God delights in true, earnest thinkers.”

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CHAPTER XVII

For three days Adoni remained at the mountain homestead with Martha. During this time brother and sister renewed their old intimate comradeship, sharing confidences and making plans for the future.

The morning after the tragic night in the garden, a special messenger brought two letters from Vallero. The one written evidently in haste, for Adoni read: "Am off for London tonight. It's the beginning of a new life for me. In that terrible moment, when I saw the spirit of your mother, and she saved us both from crime that realization—Thank God! made a man of me. I love your sister purely. I shall prove it to you both. All I ask is that I be granted a chance to make good. Will you return a few lines with the messenger, so that I may know your attitude toward me? It will help me in transforming my life—Clarence Vallero."

Martha's letter was much longer; it was full of tender assurance of love and loyalty, sorrow over the necessity for their separation and his hopes for a happy future, when he would win back her love and respect. Martha continued reading through her tears, turned back and read

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extremely doubtful. Tonight his physician expressed little hope for his life."

"Manning has made a full confession admitting his forgeries, and declares he committed the crime because his income did not permit the lavish expenditures his sweetheart demanded. Gerald Manning was known to have been infatuated with Marie Lemoine, the music hall favorite, with whom he was dining on the night of his arrest. When interviewed, Miss Lemoine disclaimed all knowledge of the forgeries and responsibility for Manning's rash act."

"Mrs. Adoni Bourdalone, wife of the former rector of St. Paul's, who is Manning's sister, and only relative, is watching constantly at his bedside and is prostrated with grief. Her husband is still in India."

The paper dropped from Adoni's hands. For a few moments he sat stunned. Gazing blankly upon the blurred landscape, he reflected sadly. Gerald's career was ended, cut off abruptly. His own rash precipitous act furnishing the tragic climax to a dissolute life. To Adoni its awful fitness revealed the working of an inexorable law, shocking as it was, revealed but the logical outcome of a heedless nature, lacking moral stamina to face the consequences of its own recklessness. What a staggering blow this would be to Frances. To lose the brother she idolized, and that brother a confessed criminal, dying under the cloud of public disgrace. It was a heavy blow, the first she had ever known, the only serious trouble she had ever been called

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The train sped on through the storm, but to Adoni it seemed a snail's pace, a funeral march. For two years, ever since discovering that Gerald had forged his signature for various amounts, Adoni had feared some startling denouncement of Gerald's misconduct and had earnestly tried to convince him of the folly and certain penalty of his course, and had used the proof of his guilt as a check upon the youth's lawlessness. With Adoni's absence in India, had come the freedom from restraint and the infatuation for the music hall favorite, which had afforded the temptation to which Gerald's weakness readily succumbed.

Adoni left the booth and boarded the first

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car that passed the hospital. Arriving there he was ushered into the doctor's office.

"So glad you were able to get here so soon, Mr. Bourdalone," he exclaimed, extending his hand in welcome. "Your presence will be a godsend to Mrs. Bourdalone. She is inconsolable."

"Is there no hope!" asked Adoni.

"He may last until morning."

"Does she know it?"

"We have tried to prepare her," but the doctor faltered. "Mrs. Bourdalone is scarcely herself. She will not have it that her brother cannot recover; she insists that you can save him."

"I should be very sorry to raise her hopes, as I'm positive that my methods would be of no avail in this case."

"I understand. At any rate I am greatly relieved to have you here, for when the end comes, I say frankly that I'm apprehensive of its effects upon Mrs. Bourdalone."

The doctor then led the way to the patient's room, tapped softly upon the door, and when the nurse opened it, beckoned her outside—Adoni entered alone—The ashen face of Gerald held his gaze for an instant, then it rested upon Frances, bent over the form of her brother. She did not move as Adoni approached but sat rigid and silent, her eyes fixed intently upon the dying man. The profile of her features, drawn with agony, were waxen hued in the gray half-light. Adoni came close to her side and whis-

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pered kindly: "Frances!" She did not move, remaining in the same strained attitude of watchful anxiety. He laid his hand upon her shoulder. She was startled and looked at him in utter surprise.

"Frances, I have come to help you."

A stifled cry of joy escaped her quivering lips. "You have come to save him. They tried to frighten me—they told me he would die—die—. Then I prayed—Yes, Don, I prayed to have God send you to save his life—and here you are. So soon was my prayer answered. O, Don, I will never doubt again—I know now there is a God." A faint color crept into her wan cheeks as she spoke in hurried, broken sentences, her appealing eyes searching his with pathetic eagerness.

Unnerved by the intensity of her grief and the awful ravages which suffering had wrought in her brilliant beauty, Adoni stood for a few moments mute before her. His silence seemed to irritate her. She went on impatiently:

"There is no time to lose," she whispered, turning again to the form upon the bed, "he looks almost as if he were——" she shuddered,— "dead. It's that horrid light from the window, let me lower the shade—there, now turn on the light."

Adoni did as she directed. A soft glow lighted the room and cast a ghastly reflection upon the death-like form. "Jerry dear," whispered Frances, leaning over him—"listen brother, Don is here—and has come to help you."—As she tenderly stroked the brow of the dying

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man, he opened his eyes—Adoni reached for the clammy hand—"Do you know me Gerald?"

There was recognition in his eyes as he met the gaze of those bending over him. "Don," he breathed faintly. "Give me—brandy."

Frances looked questioningly at Adoni who nodded assent.

With difficulty Gerald swallowed the strong spirits. Presently under its reviving influence he spoke again: "I'm done for, Don—sure thing—I—I—."

"No, no!" cried Frances, vehemently, "you will not die. Don will save you." She turned her eyes wild with uncertain terror and inquiry upon Adoni.

"What are you waiting for? Why don't you begin to treat him?"

Gerald raised his hand in feeble protest. "Don, can't do anything—for me, sis—no one can—poor Frank—it's hit you hard—but, don't fret about me sis—dying isn't so bad—if I only knew—? What do you think Don? Is there a hell——?"

"No, Gerald. Not the kind that you mean, of brimstone and fire, where a cruel God would delight in torturing you eternally. But—there is a hell of burning remorse, through which all who sin must pass. But there is no crime so great that a 'God of Love' would condemn forever."

A light of hope shone in Gerald's eyes. A faint smile flitted across his thin drawn lips as they trembled: "Then I'm not afraid to die—."

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Adoni was stroking his hand as he spoke reassuringly: "You are not going to die, Gerald, but merely pass from your body into another phase of existence, where you will begin to live a spiritual life, free from the temptations and torments of the flesh; your soul will enjoy such happiness as you never experienced before in earth life."

"I know you wouldn't lie to a chap, Don—". Feverishly Gerald's eyes sought those of his sister, looking at him intensely—.

"Frank—" he gasped for breath a moment—then went on with a great effort. "Don't make a mess of your life sis—quit the game before it is too late—remember—it's hell for the poor devils you make fools of—it's a rotten game—cut it out—sis—it will surely get you."

Frances buried her face beside his upon the pillow. A painful silence followed, broken at length by Gerald attempting to speak. His words came very feebly:—"It's good of you to come, Don—you'll square things for—the kid—it's a boy—I'd like to see him—before—is there time to send for Lil——?"

"Yes, Gerald—thinking that this would please you and Lillian, I have already dispatched a messenger for her and the baby; they may be here any moment, and I want you and Frances to be real brave and friendly and bid her a cheerful welcome so that——."

A light knock at the door interrupted his sentence. The doctor entered. After testing the patient's pulse he produced a hypodermic needle

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and deftly injected a stimulant into Gerald's arm. "There sir, we are now ready for another visitor," with professional cheeriness the doctor announced. "The lady you have sent for, Mr. Bourdaloue, has arrived and I will ask her to come up at once."

In a half dazed condition, Frances lifted her head from the pillow and watched eagerly her coming. Another moment and Lillian was ushered into the sick room. At the door she hesitated—timidly casting a frightened glance at the form upon the bed. Adoni came to greet her. The baby upon her arm, with his large blue eyes looked wonderingly from one to another, then turned his curly head upon his mother's shoulders. "I am very glad, Lillian, that you have hastened to come so soon." Taking her gently by the hand, he led her to the bedside and drew a chair for her.

Gerald's eyes were fixed upon the child with hungry yearning. He did not speak but followed the little fellow's movements until he looked without fear at the white form upon the bed—then back again at his mother, gurgling inarticulately: "Ma-ma-ma-ma."

Gerald turned to Lillian. "Can—he—say—papa—?" Lillian shook her head. Tears welled into her eyes.

"It's good of you to come, Lil—I don't deserve it—God knows how sorry I am." He choked—His eyelids drooped for a moment—then opened again and he whispered faintly: "There'll be—money—to bring up the kiddie—"

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Don—will you——” his breath stopped short; he lapsed into unconsciousness.

Frances, who had been watching the scene with an intense strain, sprang to the bedside. “Be quick, Don,” she cried, “don’t let him sink back into that stupor—will you let him die—?” she ejaculated with indignant entreaty, “without making one effort to save him?”

Adoni reached for her hands and with gentle gravity said: “Frances, try to be brave, and understand that my power to heal can not save Gerald’s life. He realizes that in his condition he can not recover and that he will be much happier——.”

“Oh,” cried Frances, hysterically, releasing her hands from his clasp, and facing him with blazing eyes. “Don’t think to pacify me with such twaddle. You say you can not save him. You mean that you will not. You want him to die—you think that he has disgraced you enough.”

“Frances, please calm yourself and listen to what I wish to say.” She gazed at him blankly, as Adoni continued firmly: “If Gerald passes away——.”

“You mean—if he dies.” A tremor shook her body. “I shall die with him—and both of us—buried in one grave.” A swift and subtle change passed over her features—she stared wildly at her brother; threw herself upon her knees beside Gerald and repeated dolefully—“Both dead—Jerry and I. No, he is not going to die—see—he is opening his eyes again—and smiles. Lillian, come quick! He wants to kiss the baby!”

Poor frightened Lillian bounded to her feet

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and rushed with the child to where Frances knelt. Frances reached for the babe madly and plunged him upon the bed, bent his head low for Gerald to kiss him. "Hurry, baby, hurry and kiss your papa—he will get well if you do."

She pressed the child upon her brother's face until in his distress he began to scream. Frances paying no heed to his cry, continued to coax the child in her frenzied way to kiss his papa.

Adoni realizing her state of mind seized the little one with one swift movement and gave him back to his mother. "Lillian, take the baby away; it is not best for both Gerald and his sister to see him any longer."

Lillian was visibly relieved to obey Adoni's orders and left the room quickly. "I will wait down stairs with mother; she came with me, if you should want me again.——"

"Yes, Lillian, I will call you if you are needed." Adoni hastened again to the bedside, but did not disturb Frances in her distressful agitation, knowing that at this time silence was golden.

Frances caught her breath with a dry sob and gazed in terrified awe at the solemn aspect of the stirless form. Then again, in rapid, incoherent whispers: "Jerry, Jerry wake up. Don't lie there so still. You frighten me. Open your eyes. You wouldn't be so cruel and leave sister all alone. I've no one but you, Jerry. Don't be afraid—sister will take care of you—you need not go to prison. Do you hear, Jerry—they shall not put you in prison. Open your eyes—and speak to me——."

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In breathless suspense, she gazed upon the pallid face, then stooping closer, she murmured, as one pleading with a child. "Come Jerry—speak once more to sister, please do." With trembling finger she wiped the death-damp from his brow, then opened the glazing eyes which were already fixed in an impenetrable upward stare—.

"Oh God!" she cried pitifully—"help him—to speak." With a sudden, forced calm, she faced Adoni and her voice had in it a trace of the old, persuasive sweetness.

"Don't mind if I spoke harshly Don, I'm—I'm not well. My head is queer. You didn't mean that you couldn't do anything—you said that just to try me, but I'm not brave, I'm a coward and it's cruel to frighten me. Listen, Don,—if you'll save him I'll be your slave, I'll do anything you say; I'll bear your children, or if you wish, Jerry and I will go away, far, far away, where you will never be troubled about us again."

There came a gasping sound from the bed—Francis turned her head quickly—.

The staring eyes of the dying man rolled back—his body quivered, then straightened and he was still.

An awful silence followed—.

Frances stood mute, motionless and white as death—. Her eyes slowly dilating with horror, she moved slowly like one in a dream towards the bed—then suddenly as if the full comprehension of what she saw burst upon her, she flung herself with a sharp shriek upon the lifeless body,

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remember, Frances? He could not take you with him; he left you to take care of his little son, and to know you will do this for him will please Gerald so much. Will you, Frances, do this for your brother?"

The woman stared wonderingly at Adoni, then asked in a toneless voice. "How do you know about this baby? My husband said there was a child, but I did not believe him—until—" she broke off, pushing back the tumbled masses of hair from her brow, as if trying to think. "Until once when Jerry was sick—that was long—long ago, the little fellow was in bed with him—but my head throbs so, I can't remember when—"

"Come Frances, sit over here by the window, the fresh air will relieve you." Adoni placed his arm gently about her and led her a few steps toward the couch, when her wandering glance caught sight of the covered form upon the bed. She started, then wrenching herself from Adoni's arms, the distraught woman darted toward it, exclaiming joyously: "Jerry is here—why did you lie to me—he did not go away—why did you cover him up like this—to hide him from me?" she cried in a shrill, discordant tone. "He can not breathe, so give him air, uncover his face."

As Adoni did not move to obey, she grasped the sheet with trembling hands, hesitated an instant, then in desperation lifted it from the lifeless form and stared at it in wild-eyed terror, then turned her head to Adoni in deepest thought.

"Look," she whispered hoarsely. "She has killed him—the treacherous wanton—he loved

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her and her horrid lure tempted him. He told me she was beautiful, as fair as I, for I was once fair, but she is vile, a heartless creature who laughs and dances, while—oh curse her, curse her!" Her voice rose in shrill wrathful frenzy, her eyes glowed with unnatural brilliancy, then as suddenly her variable mood changed and in pleading accents she faltered.

"Sister is not like that Jerry, not so vile, not so cruel. It may be that I was cruel, that the count died for love of me, I can't remember, but God has punished me, for now I am ugly, my beauty is gone; there will be none to care for me now, Jerry, no one but you. You must get well, for you're all I have. We will go away together; come, we must go before they put you in prison. Come! You must not go to sleep again." She placed her hands beneath the shoulders of the dead and with unnatural strength would have raised the stark form by sheer force, had not Adoni interposed.

"Stop! Frances, you must not awaken him," he said imperatively. "If you want him to get well, you must let him sleep. See how late it is; you cannot go until morning. You must go to bed and rest, or you will not be able to go at all."

"Yes," she sighed plaintively, withdrawing her hands and pressing them to her eyes, "I'm very tired. It's ages since I have slept; if only I could sleep as soundly as Jerry sleeps; but I shall never sleep again, never—never again. It is hard, for when I try to sleep, strange dreams come to me; horrible, waking dreams, and I lie

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Adoni stroked her head with a gentle, magnetic touch. "Poor tired head," he said, tilting it so as to catch her wavering fitful glance. Then, looking intently into the turbulent depths of her eyes, he said firmly: "Frances, you are going to your room now, you are going to bed at once and have a nice long sleep, the nurse will take you." He summoned the nurse and doctor, and explained. "I found it necessary to use hypnotic suggestion in quieting the overwrought tension of Mrs. Bourdalone's nerves; you need fear no further outburst, she will sleep peacefully until I awaken her. Everything possible must be done to make conditions favorable when she awakes. Anything suggestive of death or a sick room must be avoided. You realize as well as myself, that her state of mind is most critical, allow no one in the room except the nurse, to see occasionally that she is sleeping soundly. Tomorrow morning at nine, I will come to awaken her.

Without a word or glance, Frances followed the nurse from the death chamber. When they had gone, Adoni sought to find Lillian who, with

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"Do not thank me for that which is the duty of every man, to stand by the wronged and friendless; if you have been benefited by my advice, that more than repays me, and now your child will be left Gerald's small fortune."

"Gerald's fortune," interrupted Lillian's mother, in astonishment.

"Yes, I attended to this at the time Father Gebhard and I made out the papers for the child's support, and this will provide for a liberal support and education for your son."

Clasping the child closer in her arms, Lillian again began to cry, exclaiming earnestly:

"I love my dear baby and my only wish now is that he will be a good man."

"God will help you, Lillian, as he has done before. Now I am going to ask a favor of you, Lillian."

"Oh! I would be so happy to do anything in my power for you."

"Then listen. I want you to help me to carry out a plan that has occurred to me concerning Frances. Her case is most serious. Unless her mind can be diverted from the tragedy when she awakens tomorrow, I'm afraid she will never regain her reason. If little Jerry were there, he might arouse her interest, his resemblance to Jerry and his helplessness might appeal to her. If I can make her feel that the child is dependent upon her now that he has no father, it might give her a normally, healthy interest in place of her morbid, hopeless state. If so, it will be necessary for the child to be with her for a few days, until

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she regains her balance. What do you say? Would it be too much for you and the boy to come and remain here in the hospital? I would not ask it if it were not the only hope I had of restoring Frances' sanity."

"Sure we'll come," replied Lillian unhesitatingly. "Poor lady, I will only be too glad to do it if it will help her, and after all you have done for me, too. When shall we come?"

"Be here at nine tomorrow. I'll see the manager about your absence. You will be recompensed for any loss of time, and your expenses while in the hospital will be cared for. And now I must go, as they will want to take charge of the body."

In the corridor Adoni found a group of newspaper men waiting to interview him. The case had gained wide publicity and he was besieged with a storm of inquiries. He finally eluded them and proceeded to direct arrangements for the funeral, then he secured an appointment with the other trustee for the purpose of going over the financial affairs of the dead man. By a wise provision of their father's will, both Frances and Gerald had been prevented from using anything except the income from the estate, which their father had left in the hands of Adoni and one other, as trustees, who were to act in this capacity until Gerald should have reached the age of fifty years, when it was to be given to them unreservedly. In the event of the death of either, the other would inherit the whole estate.

Adoni realized that this would leave Lillian's

[illegible]

It was late when Adoni finally turned his steps toward his hotel. In the press of the day's demands he had neglected to eat and in passing the lighted cafe adjoining the hotel, he suddenly realized that he was hungry. He entered and was at once shown to a table. While waiting to be served, his eye wandered over the gay groups seated at the various tables. It was the usual after-theatre crowd; the scene was brilliantly animated, there was a riot of color, beautiful women gorgeously gowned, men in correct evening attire, the gleam of white shoulders and the barbaric blaze of innumerable jewels, music, mirth and the clinking of glasses mingled together in gay revelry.

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with her. It took the combined arguments of the whole party to dissuade her. As the waiter brought his dinner, Adoni overheard a man on his left say to his companion: "Lemoine seems to be celebrating the death of young Manning in characteristic fashion. I believe she actually looks upon the affair as a good advertisement for herself."

So that was the woman for whom Gerald gave up his life? Adoni surveyed her long and earnestly, and marveled at the perverted taste that could prefer this vain, heartless creature to the modest and trusting Lillian; wondered that any man should become a criminal to gratify the vulgar extravagance of such creature as Marie Lemoine. He asked himself why it was that nature, which never makes a mistake, had inflicted upon the world this vampire type of woman whose sinister lure rouses the basest in man and whose selfishness accepts all and gives nothing. Could it be nature's way of revenging itself upon men for the misdeeds of some dead, forgotten past? Thus soliloquizing, Adoni sat at the table long after he had finished his meal, until he was greeted by several old friends who were greatly surprised at his return from the Orient. Wishing to evade any question that might be asked in regard to the tragic death of Gerald Manning, Adoni bade them a hasty "good-night" and left the pleasure seeking throng amid the music, laughter and dazzling lights.

The following morning Adoni arose at a late hour. He had barely time to eat a hurried lunch

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before it was time to go to the hospital. Arriving there, after the appointed hour, he was met in the reception hall by the house physician, who bade him "good morning" in a grave manner.

"You are too late, Mr. Bourdalone."

"How so? Has my wife already awakened?" The doctor shook his head sadly! Then quietly handed Adoni an empty bottle marked: "Poison."

"This, said the doctor, was found under Mrs. Bourdalone's pillow."

"My God!" gasped Adoni!—"Frances also a murderess!"

. . . .

Two days later a small group of mourners stood around two open graves. Two caskets bearing the bodies of a brother and sister were slowly lowered! Clods of earth fell drearily upon the tenements of clay—covering with it,—the remains of "Life's Tragedy."

The Reverend Adoni Bourdalone spoke briefly:

*"Oh, death, where is thy sting?
Oh, grave, where is thy victory?"*

*"The wages of sin is death,
But the Gift of God is Eternal Life."*

Little Jerry and his mother dropped a few flowers on papa's grave, and said: "Good-bye!"

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CHAPTER XVIII

The sun had just risen.

In a garden expressing everywhere the language of God, lovers were walking with arms entwined about each other. As they seated themselves near a splashing fountain, the ardent lover drew unto his breast the beautiful woman—kissed her upon the forehead—and spoke most tenderly.

“Just twelve years ago this morning, I roamed through a large forest. Underneath the ancient trees I fell into a sleep in which my soul took flight into the invisible. In my spirit wanderings I entered a garden of Eden, and there beheld you, my Love, coming to me. In supreme happiness we listened to the music of the spheres; as I hear it now on this day of perfect peace—.”

“Adoni, my beloved King. How often have we related to each other this marvelous experience; how at the same hour my soul transcended into celestial realms, there I searched for the one I secretly loved. In that holy stillness my heart cried out in longing—my call was heard. A trembling echo brought the answer of another lonely soul seeking its mate. The plaintive echo drew nearer—then a sudden cry of joy broke the strained silence.—You, Adoni,

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came to me. Our souls were blended with love divine—our lips were sealed with kisses, our hearts beat as one. In the arms of infinite love we knelt at God's altar; and the Master pronounced us man and wife."

"When I awakened from my trance-like slumber, and confided my wonderful dream to mother, my tender feelings for you, Adoni, were no longer a secret. At that time mother and I did not understand the great occult laws by which our souls can reach the one we love."

"Yes, Truth, my noble wife—now we know that the soul's true vision is but a prophecy of what will, sometime—somewhere, come true. Just as our dream of heaven has been realized, and God has given to me one of His ministering angels as companion. A pure, beautiful woman, whose divine love makes her heart overflow with tenderness and sympathy for all suffering humanity; whose soulful eyes and smile radiate sunshine into the darkest places, her voice an inspiration, her deeds a benediction to mankind. The glory of such love, my beautiful one, where divine and human love are blended in one, is ours. Our souls spiritually akin, are played in tuneful harmony, our hearts beat echoing faith and tenderness to one another; our love we hold sacred as the highest gift of God. A love that will transform the humblest home into a king's palace; the hardest labor into pleasure. How soul-satisfying is the joy of the smallest gift from the loved one, the magnetic charm of an appreciating word, the ecstatic thrill of the soul's holy kiss."

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As Adoni Bourdalone spoke these words with infinite tenderness, tears of joy and gratitude welled from his heart—long and silently he pressed his lips upon those of his Angel of Light.

And thus, the poets and dreamers dwell together in "that peace that passeth all understanding."

"Their love and wondrous happiness no mortal language can describe, for spiritual love perfected, as far exceeds material passion as the steadfast glory of the sun outshines the flickering of an earthly taper."

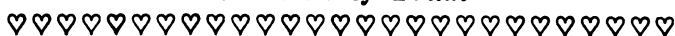
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"Here you are again, in fondest embrace, just like lovers, in their first delirium of love, telling each other I suppose, on this, of all mornings, that old sweet story, while the children are looking for their papa and mamma."

Mrs. Ralston laughed heartily as she related, how baby Donald had just tumbled out of bed with happy anticipation of the fireworks he was going to see at the big show today.

Mrs. Ralston was not the same worldly woman of twelve years ago, whose sole aim had been to shine in the social firmament. Since her daughter's marriage to Adoni Bourdalone, their household cares had been in her charge. Gradually she had assimilated the pure atmosphere that surrounded the happy man and wife, and through their influence became more spiritual, learned from daily experience that human happiness came not from the false glitter of social conquest. On this delight-

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ful morning, her sweet greeting and temperament breathed of the higher ideals she had absorbed. Her life had become transformed in the supreme happiness of Truth and Adoni, and the joys of motherhood had never been so keen, as now, when she sought to impress upon her daughter and son the real joy she had found in their home life, and pleasures of their two beautiful children.

On this most essential day, which marked the fruition and hopes of Adoni Bourdalone, his sister Martha, who had become the worshiped wife of Clarence Vallero, were part of the sublime consummation.

Through the power of love, this man of the world became regenerated. His vast wealth was diverted from channels of vice and selfish ambition into a holy purpose. This financial support had been a potent aid to Adoni Bourdalone in reaching the goal. His ideals and life's ambitions were realized, and today the people would see the results of his work, in which Martha and Vallero shared the joys and honor due to the courage of his soul's convictions.

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One of the loveliest of all spring mornings greeted the City of Truth on its tenth anniversary.

The Holy City first seen in prophetic visions was now a "Living Reality," a model city of the twentieth century. Without the blare and seductive lure of misleading prospectus it had serenely risen into fame. On a bedrock of Love its foundation rested. Its superstructure raised by the commandment Christ gave: "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

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The City of Truth—the City of Light was celebrating on this day its glorious triumph. Its streets bedecked in gala attire were filled with enthusiastic pleasure seekers, and a large number more reflective who had come for knowledge of how, this city had become in a brief space of time, world-wide famous.

This City was the image and likeness of the one first seen in a dream by Adoni Bourdalone, described many times by him to the dwellers of the little hamlet, who, through the inspiring eloquence of their beloved teacher were able to catch the vision, and had it not been for the noble incentive instilled into their hearts this City of Truth would have still remained—a dream.

In this Holy City, Love reigns supreme. Love for God, and love for man. Love beats in every human heart for one another. Love the motive power back of all work and achievements; Divine love which builds character and develops the soul. A love that transforms the humblest home into a happy one, where children are born and reared in love. Schools are filled with students and scholars seeking from Christian teachers the science of religion—life—and the Christ principle which develops the human family into god-men and women.

Upon this day, the tenth anniversary of the City of Truth, a party of distinguished men, were treading their way through a merry throng, touching shoulders in true democratic fashion, and chatted happily along their tour of inspection.

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The group comprised, aside from Adoni Bourdalone, the Governor of the great sovereign state, Bashinar and Vallero. The Governor who had watched the rising of this ideal city since its inception, was intently interested in its progress and prospective achievements. Bashinar, the Oriental teacher had come over the seas to witness the triumph of his pupil, and observe by personal contact the result and the exemplification of lofty ideals, as shown in the life-work of Adoni Bourdalone, and the fruition of his dream by the application of the Christ principles taught in the Oriental retreat.

Clarence Vallero, the awakened, was an earnest worker with Adoni in the community's progress. His vast wealth and zeal had been entirely devoted to the upbuilding of the City of Truth. Inspired by love for Martha Bourdalone, now his adored wife, his life had become of use to his fellow man and Adoni's triumph was, in a measure, part of his own. As the party ascended the broad steps to the building of Moral Science, the Reverend Bourdalone, pointed to an inscription upon a tablet of stone. "This," he said, "is broad enough to become a universal religion, and I feel the time is not far away, when the world will accept it as such."

The amber eyes of the Oriental mystic became thoughtful. "One hardly ventures to conjecture," he returned, hesitatingly—"In view of the startling disclosures which science is continually uncovering, one can scarcely forecast what the future may develop. Your eminent countryman,

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Edison, declares to the world that—"We are now on the verge of discoveries so wonderful and great that they will upset the present trend of human thought, and start it along new lines completely."

"Quite true," assented Adoni. "Religion, like everything else is, or should be, subject to change. It is ignorance to say that it is incapable of improvement, growth or progress. The science of religion is ever ready to accept and teach new truths that are daily revealed in the process of the unfoldment. A man can only proclaim what he knows today, but cannot say, that he will believe the same, tomorrow."

When they had entered the dignified building, the Governor glanced about in astonishment. "Why," he exclaimed, "this is more like a classroom than a church."

"It is a classroom," replied Adoni with a smile. "Here we have daily classes in ethics. You will not find in our city any separation of sacred and secular, our homes are as sacred as our temples."

From the temple of Modern Science the group wended their way to the hall of Justice, where Adoni explained, a board of arbitration consisting of men and women elected by the people meet once a week. They have a session to hear and adjust grievances and rarely is it necessary to refer cases to the courts.

"And do you find one hearing a week sufficient to satisfy the demands of justice?" observed the Governor questioningly.

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"Thus far it has proven more than sufficient. Our system offers little opportunity for injustice, and commission of misdemeanors and crime, hence there is less need for judicial interference and administering of harsh methods of punishment. Then again our aim is not so much to punish the offender as to compel restitution whenever possible, teach human sympathy, and with divine love, reform and convert the culprit into a christian."

From here the four men made their way to the factory district, located some distance down the river. Over the doors of these buildings of industry were various mottoes and sentiments relating to industry and its fruits. After studying these most thoughtfully, the Governor turned to Adoni with unwonted gravity: "I see that your industrial system, if possible, is even more revolutionary than your religious program. The problem is here confronting the state, the nation, the world, we can't dodge the issue, it must be solved. It is the most imminent, most vital and most difficult thing on the cards. Those who have their ear to the ground have long been aware of it. If it can only be brought about peacefully, but gentlemen, I believe we will witness the greatest war the world has ever seen."

"It may be that you are right," responded Bashinar, thoughtfully. "The situation is becoming daily more serious. But our friend here, who has made a great study of these industrial conditions, is better qualified to answer that question."

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Thus appealed to, Vallero, who had been an attentive listener, replied: "No man can predict whether it is to be a battle of ballots or bullets, but whatever the method employed, there is in my opinion, no doubt, as to its final outcome. The triumph of industrial liberty is as sure as the revolutionary force back of it. The present system is top heavy and if left alone will fall of its own weight."

Retracing their steps they came upon a beautiful group of buildings bearing the legend: "Health," "Hygiene," "Healing." Here the most improved methods known to science were employed for prevention of disease.

"I hear, Mr. Bourdaloue, that you are as successful in teaching your method of healing as you are in effecting cures," observed the Governor.

"It is quite true—and a source of deep gratification, I assure you. Several students have nearly mastered the science and it is in this field, perhaps more than any other, that we expect the most marvelous discoveries, the greatest revolution. Fifty years from now it will be considered the height of stupidity for a man to go to another to be healed."

Happily the party wended their way towards what appeared to be a magnificent park, as they entered they were greeted by sweet strains of music. In the center of this gorgeous garden stood a mammoth building with a tower reaching far above the city. A revolving light within this tower reflected its radiance far and near, illuminating the grounds like a fairyland, yet to the

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hundreds promenading along the walks, this great festival was enjoyed only—in darkness.

As Adoni and his guests entered the stately building, a woman radiant with smiles, bade them all a hearty welcome. Grasping Truth Bourdalone's hand, the Governor shook it heartily, and said deeply impressed:

"So this is the wonderful achievement of your estimable wife, the famous Lighthouse for the Blind?"

Adoni gazed lovingly upon Truth, standing at his side, then proudly replied:

"Yes, through the guiding spirit of my dear wife, and life's aspiration has proven, how much good can be done to ennoble and elevate the whole world by one true unselfish worker. Mrs. Bourdalone's labor of love and untiring effort in the past twelve years, has realized, her fondest dream—A lighthouse for the world in darkness."

Bashinar, who had been until now a silent observer, interposed gravely:

"Metaphorically speaking, this grand structure, embodying a holy purpose, stands as 'A Beacon Light' for those in physical and multitudes in spiritual darkness."

A faint smile overspread Adoni's beaming countenance as he continued:

"It is but a home and refuge for the blind, and like a Saviour to hundreds, who would otherwise be doomed to a living death."

"I am more than interested in the method and work accomplished through the agency of the lighthouse, will you kindly explain it more

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fully?" "Certainly Governor," replied Truth cheerfully, "we shall be only too happy to do this. But come, let us be seated, for our dear young ladies whose guests you are, have anxiously waited to serve you with refreshments."

While partaking of the hospitality prepared for this occasion Truth related, how the new law for the prevention of blindness had made wonderful progress through the aid of doctors and medical journals. And how the foundation of this magnificent institution had been laid by their loyal friend, Clarence Vallero, and sustained from the gifts of hearts, awakened through love and sympathy for the blind.

The appointments of the Lighthouse, were in accord with the ideals which had inspired Truth from the moment she had been blessed with the restoration of her sight, one of God's most precious gifts, denied to hundreds. Here within a world of their own they found realization of hopes that before had been shattered by an indifference to their affliction. People who meant to be generous, but whose opportunities to minister to the sightless ones had been neglected by a false conception of generosity. A generosity which had been devoted to the pleasures of the more fortunate ones, while the lives of thousands of unfortunate ones were left shrouded in darkness.

In the Lighthouse—a home for the afflicted ones, Truth found the highest expression of her soul's ideals which radiated everywhere the sunshine of human kindness.

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The very embodiment of music was represented in Truth's girlhood friend, Faith Morris, who, bereft of sight beyond hope of blessed vision, had achieved contentment, and with all the knowledge attained through the mission the Lighthouse for the Blind exemplified. Faith had mastered the divine art of music, the language of the heart, the medium of expression from the soul, which no man can deny humanity's unfortunates. And through God's grace Faith became the instrument to bring into the Lighthouse that element of joy and peace which music brings to the world. And in this loyal friend, Truth Bourdaloue had a noble aid that added to the inspiration for others.

From the Lighthouse, Adoni, accompanied by his wife and children, conducted their guests in vehicles awaiting them, to a temple devoted to the upliftment of the human family and evolution of higher ideals. The beauties of nature surrounding the building sounded a note of harmony that expressed that divine influence that makes the whole world akin.

The temple represented a unity of purpose, born of divine love that found its deepest expression in the hearts of the people. It was the realization of the thought voiced by Adoni when he bade farewell to his worldly flock, in the great church where his ministrations were bound about by material influences far from the real mission that inspires the sincere devotee of truth. And the people of the community had shown that Adoni's hopes had reached the issue he had sought.

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And now on this tenth anniversary, the world was to know of this wonderful achievement. It was set forth as the ground work of a great purpose, whose limits were not to be bounded by the environment of the City of Truth. Adoni chose this day to proclaim to the world those truths which he had sought, and found. Years before he had told in open expression that his mission reached far beyond the creeds of human dogmas, and that he would some day be able to show by practical illustration what his struggles meant for mankind. Now the time had come for him to show that his work had not been in vain. He was able to present the truths he had preached, in material form, and on this tenth anniversary of the City of Truth he was ready. He had invited skeptics to witness the results, and to these he would show the truths destined for man to realize the Kingdom of God on earth. The thought that he had been one of the humble instruments in the consummation, he thrust aside and gave thanks alone to the divine power which had inspired the plan, and forgot not to include the instruments who had made the accomplishment possible.

In this Temple the people found a satisfying religion, where no denominational creed found resting place, but where the faith upon which the city was founded, bound the people into universal brotherhood of man; where the souls of all could find that consolation the human heart yet yearned for since the beginning of time; where the dogmas of modern teachings

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CHAPTER XIX

A TEMPLE OF LOVE—stands supremely—Alone. Densely embedded in banks of flowers, this building of spotless white surpasses all conception of beauty. Its stately grandeur, and impressive individuality points to the—"Kingdom of God." Within this temple set apart for sacred worship, the light of glory shines through a starry firmament, touching the wondrous painted walls like a canopy of heaven. In this holy of all holy realm, music is played to "the song of the soul." Hungry hearts are "welcome" and fed with the bread of life, and all can feel the presence of God. In this "Temple of Love" untainted by the breath of Mammon, the pure, unselfish doctrine of Jesus is preached. The "CHRIST"—without human dogma. At His sacred shrine all souls awakened, worship the Creator "in spirit and in truth."

On that great night, the tenth anniversary of the City of Truth, silver-toned bells were solemnly chiming the sweet strains of "The Holy City." At the hour of seven, Adoni Bourdaloue, the founder of the City of Light, was to proclaim in the Temple of Love, "A Religion of Joy."

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As the stately form appeared upon the rostrum and came forward in the "Spirit of his own Light," the vast assembly arose to their feet. With the tremble of organ notes, each voice sang in harmony divine, "*Nearer My God to Thee.*"

The grand anthem, diminished into an awed stillness. Adoni Bourdaloue was transformed to an inspired prophet. The prayer of thanks he offered for this sacred festival breathed deep reverence, in which he held the mass of people that came to hear his message—in strained silence.

Christ said: "This generation shall not pass away until all my words are fulfilled."

The spirit of the time, indicates a great corruption in the destiny of man.

Throughout the universe souls are being awakened, and are standing before the Great Consciousness in the dawn of the awakening. In the 'Cosmic World' we learn that 'man can command all things save love.' 'Love must be born in the soul and of the soul.' To awaken this love of the soul is to place into action, the highest power in the universe. Love is not what we feel for a person, but that strong spiritual feeling that makes every atom in your being thrill with purest sympathy and kindness for every creature in existence. To feel the interior presence of this love with its strong invincible power, lifts you into a world that is fairer than we ever imagined heaven to be.

The intellectual man, thinks many times that this is only sentiment and therefore has no

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value for the material life. But too often the practical mind looks for his treasures in the realm of cause and in consequence finds but little joy and value anywhere in life.

“The cause of so many failures of those who think they have found the true principle of life may be found in the tendency to depend wholly upon their intellect as the power that does things in the visible, and their lives result many times in failure.

We all come to places at times, when the sea of life is tempest-tossed and the winds of adversity are mercilessly raging about us; we fear and tremble that our ship may become wrecked and we perish. When the soul becomes awakened by the Light of Truth, conscious of Christ principle and supreme power, 'one with God, the waves in our mind will be stilled, the billows upon the sea of thought are tossing no more, the dark clouds have vanished; the storm has ceased and all is still; there comes a beautiful calm. The peaceful waters seem radiant with joy, as they glisten in the sunbeam from the smile of God. And so becomes our lives, when the spirit of Christ dwells in us, and man reigns as Master, —enthrones the power of the soul in every thought and deed, puts its entire force into realization, and thus gains emancipation, and the salvation we seek.

Millions are living artificial lives—not understanding the law of being, depend upon their little personal selves, and thus become weaklings; they achieve nothing from a sustaining existence.

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When man—"the image and likeness of God" begins to live the soul-life, that moment he will receive divine power and become stronger in all the elements of his being, rising ever in the scale, passing from victory to victory. Living continually in the ideal, man gets into the current of mighty forces; great minds and illumined souls in this, an invisible world, will work in harmony with you; you will become a living part and chief element upon which depends the future generation.

"The Kingdom of God" is at hand now, abundantly supplied with everything that can beautify life, and there is not a living soul today that cannot enter the lost Paradise—the promised land of Eden. Jesus taught the existence of a spiritual realm within man and emphasized again and again the necessity of living in this higher state, if we would receive what love and life can give. In this age, the entering of this secret place, the inner chamber of the soul, has been called the silence. It is the prayer that is uttered in the silence that is answered; it is truth that is realized in the silence that gives freedom, peace and wholeness to man. The purpose of the silence is to unite the world of things with the world of spirit, and thus give the fairest life in all the world to body, mind and soul.

"To him who hath faith all things are possible. Faith is the Master Mind that opens the limitless powers of the soul. Faith is the hidden secret through which the prophets gained their wisdom and power through which all

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miracles were wrought. True faith is a spiritual state of mind, beautiful beyond description, and does not work apart from intellect, but gives soul and wisdom to intellect that mind cannot measure. Faith penetrates the great unknown and makes it known. Through the action of faith new mental worlds are discovered and we stand on the verge of rare genius, superior talent and intelligence that knows no bounds in wisdom."

"There is abundance of hope in the world, but what we need is more faith." Everybody is hoping for better things; the poor hope to get rich; the sick hope to get well; the sad hope to gain happiness; the troubled hope to find peace; everybody is hoping for something, but few have faith to secure that something. "To live in hope is to die in despair," because hope remains stationary; it never gains what it hopes to gain. But when faith begins, we remain stationary no more. We press onward and upward and with the power of love we reach the goal; our hopes are soon realized; our desires granted; what we wished for is withheld no more. Through faith we have entered that world where every prayer is answered and every wish made true.

The soul that lives most perfectly in the present, creates most nobly for the future. Be yourself today, regardless of what happened yesterday. Be all you can be today and you will live in a fairer world tomorrow. Nature sings the everlasting of "Him who is closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet," and every human countenance beams with the beautiful smile of

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“When you live in the presence of the Infinite you are constantly in touch with higher powers and superior guidance. You will therefore not only be able to accomplish far more in your chosen vocation, but you will be prevented from going astray. The very moment you are persuaded to take a misstep, the spirit from within interferes and you are again prompted to proceed on the true path. When you are on the verge of doing something that is not best, higher power appears; something unexpected happens to disappoint and upset all your hopes and proposed plans, and you are led to see from the light within that there is something better in store. When you are in doubt or in darkness, leave it to God; the right way will open and the very best will come to pass.

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on the surface is not in harmony with the deep things of life; is not conscious of the inner light of truth, and is therefore in darkness. To be in darkness is to go wrong, and to go wrong is to create evil."

"When we are illumined by the light of the spirit we will not go wrong, because we can see the right, and to see the right is the very thing we have desired, longed and prayed for. All mental light, even the light of reason, comes from within; therefore, when the mind is absorbed in outer things, it ignores completely the within and evils must necessarily follow. But when your treasure is in the spirit and you love the riches of the soul better than anything else, you will dwell in the very light of infinite wisdom.

To lay up treasures in heaven is not to prepare for a heaven in the future, but to accumulate greater spiritual riches here upon earth and learn to use them today for the glory of God and the emancipation of man. To become a strong soul, to attain mastery of the spirit, to become a living inspiration to all the world, to unfold all that is lofty, beautiful and sublime in the spiritual life, and draw nearer to the Christ state—that is the purpose of him who is laying up treasures in heaven. There is no truth in the belief that we must necessarily relinquish external possession the moment we begin to lay up treasures in heaven. The power that produces the riches of the spirit, can, and will produce abundance in the external world as well. So long as we seek only the treasures of earth

[illegible]

“Make yourself a living example of the power of the spirit. Do not permit a single weakness to continue for a moment. Live the beautiful God-life so you become a living benediction to all who pass your way. Realize that not a single good deed can be lost; somewhere it will bless somebody. Learn to know that every good seed that you may sow in the garden of human life, will some day take root. You may not remain long enough to see the flowers bloom, but somebody will, and the fact that your hand planted the seed and bore its fruit, is pleasure enough for you. To feel that you have given pleasure to someone else is the greatest happiness of all. To let your light shine wherever you may go without ever looking back to see if there were results or not, is the mark of every great soul. Scatter everywhere seeds of love and leave the results to Him that faileth not.

“When you realize that you are an entity through which God is expressed, and that your mind should be so transparent that the highest divine light may shine through and illumine the outer world, you have found your true place. The divine power will flow through your being, radiating in every direction, giving the spirit of truth to everything you may think, say or do.

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You thus become a personal expression of the word and your life will be a message of truth to the race.

"God is Love," power—wisdom—life. Love, the principle upon which spiritual healing is based, may be found that "man is created in the image and likeness of God." The spiritualman is as God made him—eternally perfect.

"Faith awakens the new life, the healing life, the purifying and regenerating life of power to attain complete emancipation from all the ills of life." To know this truth is to know the truth that makes man free, and this truth can be known by every mind that will enter into the conscious realization of the spirit of truth; to know the truth, the spiritual understanding becomes necessary. The intellectual understanding looks upon truth from without and thus learns to comprehend the outer form of truth. There is a world of eternal truth where everything is as wonderful, and perfect as truth itself; and there is a world of mere appearance where everything is passing and nothing is real. In the world of appearance we find pain, sickness, evil and death. To pass through the world of appearance and darkness is to continue in suffering.

"Ignorance of truth is the cause of all misery." Man works in opposition to natural law—drifts to where destruction awaits him.

"Nations are today plunged in the most disastrous war the world has known. Our hearts bleed as we gaze upon monarchs clutching at

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each other's throats, while innocent millions are thrown into the maelstrom of national strife, giving their lives to satisfy the ambition of Kings and obey the rules of the land. Famine and destitution follow in the wake of greed brought to issue in this raging conflict of jealousy between the nations calling themselves civilized.

"Pestilence sweeps over the countries formerly glowing with nature's riches and domestic contentment, and the innocent are sacrificed for an earthly kingdom. Man never was given dominion over man. Who then, gave the crowned heads of this world, the authority to compel millions to break the commandment?

"Thou shalt not kill."

"Multitudes of christian men are ushered by tyrant kings upon battle fields, forced to destroy human lives, unconsciously and ignorantly committing murder in the first degree."

In this enlightened age, psychology has made great progress in brain building, and has modified intellectual life, but—has failed to change the heart of man, just as christians have failed to embody the Christ Ideal.

"The voice of the awakened soul assures man of the undeniable existence of a great intelligence which will bring order out of chaos. 'Sin must eventually slay itself—leaving room for only good.'"

The intelligent minds are now asking the vital question—? "Will war ever cease to exist—?"

"When man has slain ignorance, 'the greatest enemy of man,' then there will be no more war.

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Having become at peace with himself there will be none to fight. All material and physical passions have been crucified—death has come to the sense man, the soul has been transmuted to a spiritual plane and the day of resurrection has come.

“What does resurrection mean—?”

“When man passes through the change called death and awakes in that life beyond the grave—?”

“No, dear friends—It means only this:”

When the soul of man awakens while still in the physical body, and rises from out of “darkness—into Light—.”

“From ignorance and blind faith into knowledge and wisdom, from hate and revenge into love and forgiveness, from selfishness and greed into sympathy and benevolence—that is Resurrection Day.

When man rises from anger and sensuality into self control and refinement; from sorrow and despair into hope and joy; from strife and conquest into calmness and peace, from slave to master; from Adam to—Christ—that is the glorious Resurrection Day.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away.”

“The spirit of God has triumphed.”

“The Redeemer of the human race has come.”

“God in man—Angel in woman have arisen into a Spiritual realm—here upon earth, where they reign as King and Queen of their own created world—illuminated by the light and

“A VISION OF TRUTH.”

**"Truth is life's factor and determinant,
And we are workers in Truth's noble cause.
We yearn for Truth, we need its light; and truth
Enters our Soul; it takes abode in us,
And consecrates our lives to higher service,
Not we own Truth, 't is Truth that owneth us.**

**Search for the Truth! Truth's problems are not vain.
Love thou the Truth! trust Truth, and live the Truth!
Walk on Truth's path and Truth will guide thee right."**



* * As I sat in the silence, meditating upon an original symbol for my book, this chain of human hearts linked together with sympathy, fraternity, faith, hope and charity, was shown to me from the world invisible. I realized its spiritual significance: That God's work can only be accomplished through the "Power of Love."

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Addenda

In writing and publishing my first book, "*A Vision of Truth*," I do not wish to pose and appear to my readers as an exponent of a high doctrine and philosophy of life without offering an explanation.

When but a child I attended Sunday school, and would listen to my teacher relating the wonderful stories of the Bible, such as Elijah ascending to heaven in a fiery chariot, I wondered even then how such great, big men could believe what sounded to me like a fairy tale. With all the Biblical teachings I could not accept the gospel as being literally true, and thus grew into womanhood an unbeliever.

With no compass to guide me, I roamed with multitudes in a wilderness. Ignorant and without faith in a future life, the thought of death, to me was terrible. In the midst of my worldly aspirations, I would stop to realize, how suddenly I could be snatched away from all my pleasures, and ushered into the cold grave—forever. That thought alone—filled my heart with horror, and the feeling that life was without a purpose, made me very lonely and unhappy.

One day, a glorious and momentous one to me, I was invited to attend a lecture on Occult laws and Psychic phenomena. Knowing not what these words implied, I listened most intently

to the intelligent speaker saying: "Yea, the fount that never runs dry is free to all; for ye who thirst, the cup is filled, and ye who hunger shall be fed. We give this message to the world that all may know the truth. That those who seek will always find that on the tree of knowledge will be found the fruit of wisdom that will enrich the mind and gain an intelligence, that if man dies he shall live again, and what that life shall be."

When this most interesting discourse was finished, the only subject that appealed to my reason, I made my way eagerly to the speaker and asked incredulously this question:

"Do you honestly believe there is a life beyond the grave?"

The dignified speaker gazed at me with tender compassion, then replied with authority:

"No, I do not believe it—I know it—"

Those three little words sank with a force of conviction to the depths of my heart, and again I asked: "If you know it—why can't I—?"

"You can. But take not our word for it. Seek—knock—open, and know for yourself. The whole universe is open to the searching of your soul, if love be the torch to light the way."

I lost no time. Sought and found in the most marvelous way a glorious truth. So happy was I in my new discovery, that I longed to fly upon church steeples and proclaim to all the world "There is no death." Alas, to my sorrow and great surprise, I learned through sad experiences, that I was not trusted, and believed any more, than those whom I had ridiculed, for what I thought to be their hallucination.

Gradually I ceased to preach, but began to practice the divine principles taught so impressively by Master Minds of the world invisible that "There is no religion higher than—Truth."

When the soul has thus become awakened, and places into action the power of faith, society looks with grave suspicion upon that, which it does not understand—Love in form Divine.

When you rise above the material world, and live for an ideal that stands at the apex of a great cause, thousands of opposing forces will stand in your way ready to hinder your spiritual progress. If you are not strong enough to overpower them—their influence brought to bear upon you, will crush you underneath its—deadly weight.

How many men and women, with lofty aspirations have not been swept away from grand achievements, by the power of thought, and cowardly sentiment of friends expressing continual fear—failure—and what other people may think, and say about you.

Ofttimes, those nearest and dearest to you, if they are incapable of understanding and appreciating your true worth, will turn suddenly—against you.

Cruel judgment will be passed upon you—criticism and contempt will be hurled at your most sacred feelings, and cherished ideals, for which they consider you but—a dreamer or—a fool.

If you are greater in spirit—and heed them not, these restricting forces will attack you ruthlessly. Like an enemy they will drag you

from your chosen path and heights attained, attempt to shatter your faith in God and man—rob you of your spiritual treasures and slay your peace and happiness.

“The fiercest gale that ever blew, is but a whisper compared to the fury of human minds set to destroy one heaven aspiring soul.”

In the battle between the opposing forces of good and evil, the author has fought many times—wounded often—fallen—Never.

In the school of life, I learned through sad experiences my hardest lesson. “To stand fearlessly—alone.” I was also taught that the great and sublime things do not come through the intellectual mind that can not rise above the world of tangible results. “That everything of joy, love and beauty in human life has come from a soul with visions, a dreamer and prophet, that can soar to supreme heights and reveal to the world some spiritual truths whereby to elevate the whole of mankind.”

In the journey of life, I delighted always to break my way into regions unknown; plough courageously through the wilderness; penetrate with the torchlight of Reason the depths of darkness. Survived every disappointment I met, removed the stumbling blocks lying along the rough road, which in my upward path served me as stepping stones and opportunity for greater things.

With faith constantly by my side, I climbed step by step until I reached the Heights, and there, in God’s world, I built my home; around it a garden of my soul, in it a temple of love,

where I thank God every hour for the sunshine, health and happiness with which I am blessed.

This spiritual love which I daily experienced thrilled my soul with a feeling of ecstasy, "creates in my heart a desire for noble things, the fervor of joy, the fire of idealism, and a passion for service."

From my heaven-uplifted dream, I am now standing at God's altar, a willing instrument through which wireless messages may be sent forth into all the world, transmitting on great love waves, flashes of thought received magnetically by the heart and soul—"In tune with the Infinite."

THE AUTHOR

